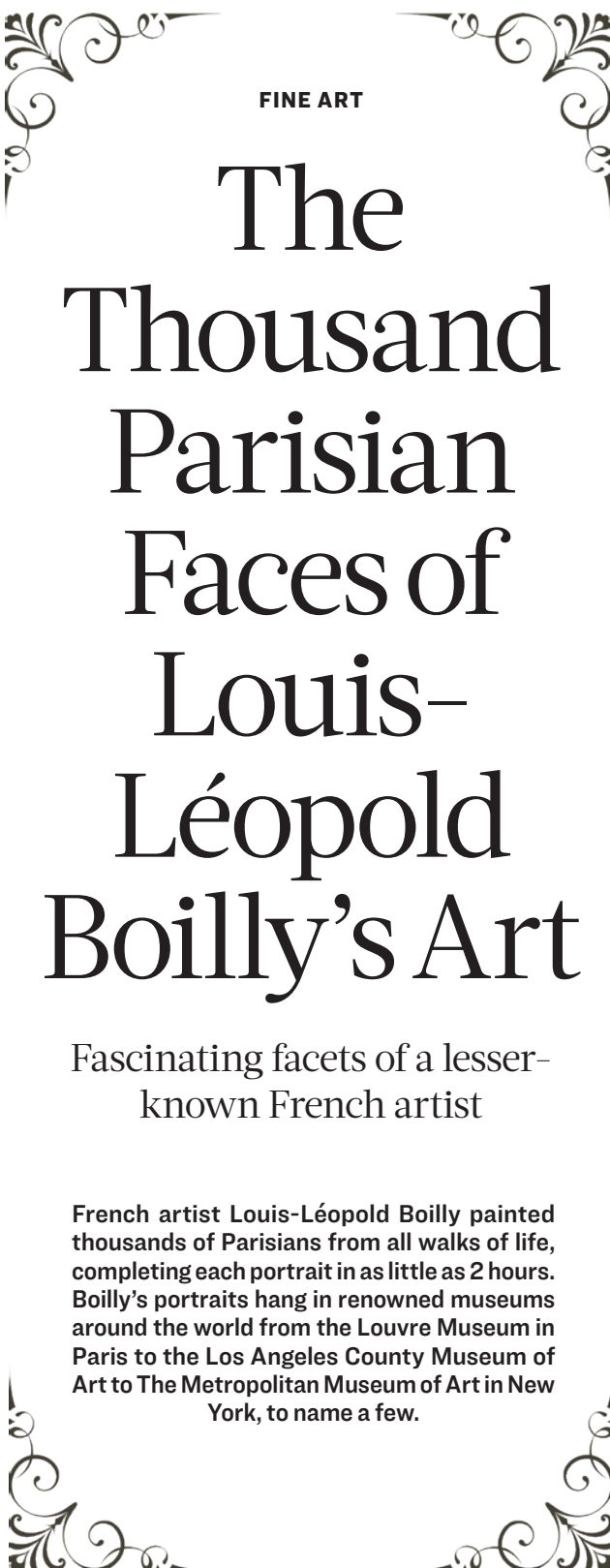
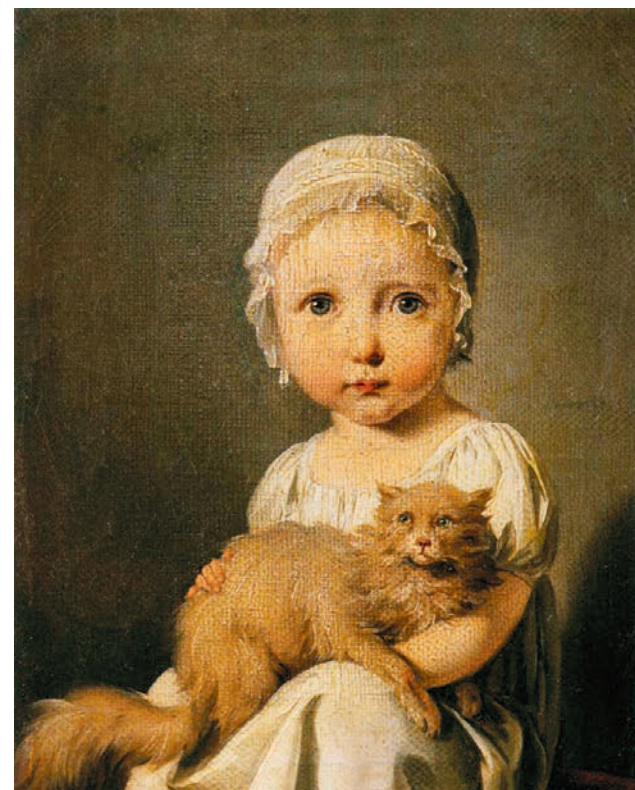


# THE EPOCH TIMES

# ARTS & CULTURE

ALL PHOTOS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN



By Lorraine Ferrier

If you've never heard of French artist Louis-Léopold Boilly, you're not alone.

In the 2019 preamble for the "Boilly: Scenes of Parisian Life" exhibition at The National Gallery in London, experts noted that the artist was barely known in the UK, mainly because most of his works haven't been studied together.

Boilly (1761–1845) painted Parisians during one of the most turbulent times in France's history in the decades before and after the 19th century: the French Revolution (1789–1799), the French Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802), and the Napoleonic Wars

(1803–1815) that led to The Bourbon Restoration (1814–1830) and the reign of King Louis XVIII, to name a few pivotal events.

He specialized in portraiture, painting some 5,000 small portraits (although some experts say it was fewer). With skill and dashing wit, he also created delightful "trompe l'oeil" ("trick of the eye") paintings and sometimes scathing caricatures, many of which were self-portraits.

He also painted Paris—from the street boulevards to the highest echelons of French society. He was the first French artist to do so, creating around 500 of these genre paintings (scenes of everyday life), including monumental history paintings.

### Portraits and Illusions

Boilly, the son of a woodcarver, grew up in La Bassée, near Arras in northern France, close to the Belgium border, where trompe l'oeil painting was as popular as in neighboring Flanders. Boilly learned the genre from local painter Guillaume-Dominique-Jacques Doncre. It's unknown where Boilly learned portrait painting, but he began his profession in 1779, when he was around 18 years old.

In 1800, Boilly painted an illusionistic painting titled "Trompe L'oeil" ("Trick of the Eye"), coining the phrase that became the name of the genre of this illusionistic art that had been practiced since ancient Greece.

When exhibited at the Louvre, his

trompe l'oeil painting "A Collection of Drawings" left viewers in such rapture as they pored over the piece in disbelief that a balustrade had to be erected to contain the crowd.

A trompe l'oeil piece that Boilly painted in the early 1800s shows his skills in portraiture and painting true to nature. He rendered a coin, a glass lens, and various small drawings and painted studies, including a small portrait of a young man. Without seeing the painting in person, it's hard to tell if the wooden frame is real, but the creased, colored papers hint that the piece is an illusion. (An artist placed clues to a trompe l'oeil painting's deception, such as a tear, a crease, an up-turned

*Continued on Page 4*



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TRADITIONAL CULTURE

# A Lost Grace?

History, culture, and the art of letter writing

By Jeff Minick

On May 24, 1844, Samuel Morse sent the world's first long-distance telegraph message—"What hath God wrought?"—and so changed forever human communication. This union of electricity and human ingenuity next brought the convenience and speed of the telephone, followed by today's internet. In 2023, a father sitting at his dining room table in the United States can now press a button on a keyboard and deliver an email in 0.2 seconds to his daughter in India.

Each of these advances reduced the need for messages written on paper and delivered by hand. Less than 40 years ago, finding a letter in the mailbox was routine. Today it is a rarity, and "snail mail," as it is derisively called, hovers on the edge of extinction. The hare in this modern race has defeated the tortoise.

But at what cost? Has the speed with which we dispatch our written thoughts and feelings also altered the depth and reflection we once put into a handwritten letter? From earlier ages, we have public and private letters revealing much about their senders and their times. Some of these letters even changed the course of history. Will our digital notes and missives be similarly preserved and read for their erudition, charm, and wit by future generations, ensuring some continuity between past and future?

If we're in doubt about that outcome, these pre-internet writers may have some things to teach us, if we are willing to learn from them.

**Greek Tweets**

Those fierce warriors of the ancient world, the Spartans, were little noted for their literary skills, but they were renowned for their brevity, so much so that our word "laconic" derives from the Greek *Lakoni-kos*, meaning "native of Sparta."

They also often managed to combine concision with wit. In 346 B.C. Philip II, king of Macedonia and father of Alexander the Great, dispatched this message to Sparta after having conquered much of Greece: "You are advised to submit without further delay, for if I bring my army into your land, I will destroy your farms, slay your people, and raze your city."

The Spartans replied with one word: "If."

Legend has it that Philip later sent a second message threatening the Spartans, asking them whether they wished him to enter their city as friend or foe. "Neither," came the answer.

Those looking to make their texts and tweets memorable might study some examples from Sparta.

**Game Changers**

In 1939, Albert Einstein signed a letter largely written by an immigrant scientist, Leo Szilard, to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, warning of the possibility of a Nazi atomic bomb and urging the government to pursue work on a similar weapon. From that letter, the Manhattan Project took shape.

Other letters have affected the course of history. The 1917 Zimmermann Telegram proposing an alliance between Germany and Mexico helped push America into World War I, and Martin Luther King's 1963 "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" acted as a spur to the Civil Rights movement. The Epistles of the New Testament addressed to communities in such places as Rome and Ephesus are part of the bedrock of the Christian faith, and even today St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians is considered a classic of letter writing.

These letters, and so many more, are reminders of the power and influence of the written word and should caution us to review and edit what we ourselves write.

**A Renaissance Job Application**

Long before he became a renowned artist, Leonardo da Vinci applied by letter for the post of military engineer for Ludovico Sforza, the duke of Milan. After a brief jab at others "who count themselves masters and artificers of instruments of war," da Vinci promised to "endeavor, while intending no discredit to anyone else, to

make myself understood to Your Excellency for the purpose of unfolding to you my secrets."

Da Vinci then listed nine specific ways he was prepared to assist Sforza against his enemies. These plans included ships impervious to cannon fire, a tank-like vehicle that would "penetrate the enemy and their artillery," and "very light, strong and easily portable bridges with which to pursue and, on some occasions, flee the enemy." He ended with a tenth proposal, asserting that in peacetime "I can give as complete satisfaction as any other in the field of architecture," and then added, "I can execute sculpture in marble, bronze and clay." He closed by offering to demonstrate his talents to the duke.

His letter is concise, its promises concrete, its tone respectful. It has the marks of a good résumé. Perhaps more importantly, da Vinci's application might teach humility to the proud, as we consider that one of the great geniuses of history had to doff his hat and ask for a job.

**Matters of the Heart**

Is romance dead?

Ask that question of your phone or computer, and the responses are generally dreary and affirmative. Whether romance lies moribund or has simply taken a furlough is uncertain, but apparently plenty of people regard it as missing from our culture. Some may wonder whether it ever existed outside of poetry and the pages of literature.

For those seeking reassurances of real-life romance, letters from the past offer a rich hunting ground. Libraries, bookstores, and online sources all sport anthologies of such letters.

One of the greatest of these collections is the correspondence between Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, who of course eventually married. This exchange of letters, which I've only skimmed, stunned me. "I love thee to the depth and breadth and height/ My soul can reach," Elizabeth famously wrote to her husband, and these letters from their courtship give evidence of that passion. Along with their multitude, their refinement, their banter, and their cultural observations, "The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, 1845-1846" are an astonishing witness to the attraction, the romance, and the deep love between these two poets.

Reading even a handful of these notes and longer missives constitutes an education in itself in the art of winning the heart of another.

**For the Children**

Writing snail-mail letters to a beloved is to proffer a physical token, to place a piece of yourself, so to speak, in their hands. This same holds true for a child or an adolescent. Much more effective than shooting out an email, sending a letter to a son or granddaughter makes the mailbox a magical place, gives them a handmade gift, and keeps the culture of letter writing alive.

Over the years, in addition to birthday greetings, I have mailed scores of typed or handwritten notes to my many grandchildren. According to their parents, the youngest of them are so excited about receiving such a note in the mail, written just for them, that they carry this sheet



▲ The letters between Elizabeth and Robert Browning show the depth of their love. Portrait of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.



▲ Letters keep us connected to loved ones. "A Letter From the Front," 1864, by Gerolamo Induno.

of paper with them like a talisman. The teenagers, to whom I sometimes send advice, know that these are special thoughts just for them and were carefully constructed rather than being dashed out via email.

Will they keep these letters and read them someday after I'm only a memory? I have no idea, but odds are that they are far more likely to do so than if I'd sent them electronic messages. Will my letters help spark in them an urge to occasionally take a pen, put it to paper,

and write to another? Again, I have no idea, but that is my hope.

**Preserving the Graces of Our Culture**

I own two reprinted books from the 128-volume set "The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies," first published in 1898. Both of my books contain mostly military correspondence. Whenever I thumb through these collections of letters, reports, and orders, I'm always impressed by the clarity and grace

of the writing. In its own way, this prose possesses a beauty all its own.

Reading all manner of old letters takes us back to a time when a writer's thoughts, cautioned by a fountain pen rather than a keyboard, were expressed with care and dignity. Most of these letters shine with an elegance and an etiquette we might do well to emulate more ourselves.

By reading such letters and absorbing some of their grace and style, and by then incorporating them into our own correspondence, we are making our own

small contributions to the preservation of our culture.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin in 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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▲ "The Public Viewing David's 'Coronation' at the Louvre," 1810, by Louis-Léopold Boilly. Oil on canvas; 24 1/4 inches by 32 1/2 inches. Gift of Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, 2012; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



▲ "Entrance to the Jardin Turc," 1812, by Louis-Léopold Boilly. Oil on canvas; 28 7/8 inches by 36 inches. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.



▲ "Compositional Drawing for 'Entrance to the Jardin Turc,'" circa 1810-1812, by Louis-Léopold Boilly. Brown ink and graphite; 11 inches by 15 inches. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

## FINE ART

# The Thousand Parisian Faces of Louis-Léopold Boilly's Art

Continued from Page 1

corner in the paper, or a broken sheet of glass over the artwork).

Northern Renaissance masters inspired Boilly, particularly the Dutch, and he collected Dutch paintings throughout his life. He was often compared to Dutch Golden Age painter Gerrit Dou, who focused on small, detailed genre and trompe l'oeil paintings. The Dutch used window motifs in many of their paintings; one only has to think of the eminent Dutch Golden Age painter Johannes Vermeer's ladies who read their letters in the light of the window.

Living in the Age of Enlightenment, Boilly had new astronomy discoveries at his fingertips. He found optics particularly fascinating, and some of these scientific instruments can be seen in his paintings, such as "A Girl at a Window." The painting reflects the artist's brilliant brushwork in making the work appear like a print and rendering a myriad of varied surfaces in gray tones, from soft skin and silk to metal, glass, and stone. Influenced by Dou, he used a carved bas-relief below the windowsill. Boilly had first painted "A Girl at a Window" in color; this gray-toned painting, a technique called grisaille, is the record of that now-lost color painting.

## Painting History in the Making

Boilly captured the hustle and bustle of Napoleonic Paris well in his painting "Entrance to the Jardin Turc (Turkish Garden Cafe)," which can be seen at the Getty Center along with its preparatory drawing.

Boilly lived in the area of the cafe

and must've seen similar scenes of Parisians taking shelter on a shady boulevard. He chose to paint an organ grinder entertaining a crowd with a puppet show. On the sidelines, a child shows a middle-class couple his tame marmot. Some of the people in the scene come from Boilly's portraits.



▲ Louis-Léopold Boilly often placed himself in his paintings. "Study Sheet With 5 Self-Portraits of the Artist," circa 1810, by Louis-Léopold Boilly. Black chalk with heightened white on paper; 6 3/8 inches by 8 7/8 inches. The Ramsbury Manor Foundation, Ramsbury, in Wiltshire, England.

Beside the tree trunk, the woman in white appears to daydream, echoing one of his sitters. Boilly put himself in the painting. He's wearing a top hat and spectacles, quietly observing us as he did so well in life.

One of Boilly's most memorable history paintings, considered the highest genre of art at the time, commemorates Napoleon's coronation. On Dec. 2, 1804, Napoleon crowned himself "Emperor of the French" in an opulent coronation ceremony held at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, rather than at the traditional venue for French coronations: Reims Cathedral in the northeastern city of Reims.

Napoleon commissioned his painter, Jacques-Louis David, to commemorate the historic and unprecedented event. David didn't disappoint. His imposing painting, nearly 20 feet tall by 33 feet wide, "The Consecration of the Emperor Napoleon and the Coronation of the Empress Joséphine in Notre-Dame Cathedral on 2 December 1804" (often shortened to "The Coronation of Napoleon"), reflects the spirit and grandeur of the three-hour ceremony. David took just over two years to complete the work, showing the moment that Napoleon's wife, Joséphine, surrounded by French and foreign dignitaries, kneels to receive her empress crown from her husband. Seeing the monumental paint-

ing, Napoleon exclaimed, "One can walk through this painting!"

David first exhibited the painting in the 1808 annual French Royal Academy salon at the Louvre.

The imperial household commissioned Boilly to paint the public reception of David's painting at the Louvre. In a now-lost letter, Boilly had written to David, asking permission to copy the painting for his new work. David visited Boilly's studio to give him his reply in person, but on finding him absent, he left a charming note:

"David came to give his response to M. Boilly verbally; it will be favorable, as he has every reason to expect from someone who had always made a case for his talent, above all [from someone] wanting to treat a subject which could only flatter him infinitely. He notes that, for the moment, the picture is still rolled up since its return from the Salon; but as soon as M. Boilly needs it—that is to say a few days from now—he should feel free to come to my studio, place de Sorbonne, and there he will do anything necessary for his [Boilly's] painting, of which the idea is charming and can only gain by being treated by him."

"I have already observed [the crowd looking at my painting], and we shall see if we both perceived it the same way."

Napoleon's coronation was an event like no other, and these paintings were the closest that many French people could be to the real event. Visitors to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York can see Boilly's finished work, "The Public Viewing

David's 'Coronation' at the Louvre."

In his painting, a crowd of excited people try to catch a glimpse and a feel for the occasion that David painted. Parents carry their children high on their shoulders to see the painting, while other people point out certain elements of the scene through the crowd.

An officer wearing a bicorne (two-cornered) hat, on the left side of the painting, reads aloud a guide to the piece and points out all the dignitaries that David painted, says The Met's emerita curator Katharine Baetjer in an audio recording on the museum website. Boilly used three bicorne hats to guide us to the focal point in David's painting: Joséphine. People

remove their hats "either in deference to the imperial couple or for better visibility," The Met website notes.

Six faces in the scene are portraits that Boilly had previously painted of artists, politicians, and men of letters. He also included a profile view of his son Julien, who would have been around 13 years old at the time. He's just above the little girl in the blue dress. The bespectacled man in a top hat looking out of the painting is Boilly himself.

Through Boilly's art, we can see Paris, Parisians, and the events that impacted and shaped not only late 18th- and early 19th-century France but also Europe and America.

Sotheby's dealer James Macdonald wrote in an auction catalog that "Boilly painted a dazzling-cross section of French society, including artists, doctors, soldiers, nobles, matrons, and children, ensuring that these portraits in their totality almost seem to capture the era better than any other monument or artwork of the age."

CARL MARTINI/BB/CC BY-SA 4.0



▲ "A Girl at a Window," after 1799, by Louis-Léopold Boilly. Oil on canvas, 21 3/4 inches by 17 7/8 inches. Bequeathed by Emilie Yznaga, 1945; The National Gallery, London.

THE SUPERMARTZ/CC BY 2.0



▲ "A Trompe L'oeil," early 1800s, by Louis-Léopold Boilly.



## THEATER REVIEW

# ‘Beauty and the Beast’ is a Lavish Production for Young and Old

Best family-friendly show of the season

By Betty Mohr

CHICAGO—Once upon a time, on a dark and bitterly cold winter night, an old woman shows up at the door of a prince’s castle. She is willing to give him a beautiful red rose if he’ll let her stay and shelter for the night. The prince takes one look at her tattered and poor appearance and turns her down.

The woman tells him that he shouldn’t be fooled by someone’s outwardly appearance because the inner person is where beauty lives. The prince isn’t persuaded and rejects her entreaty. It was an unkind and not very smart move since the old woman is really an enchantress. She transforms the prince into an ugly beast and his servants into a variety of household objects. She leaves the red rose behind to act as an hourglass. The only way the prince can break the spell is to learn to love and to earn the love of another before the last petals on the rose fall off.

So begins “Beauty and the Beast,” one of Disney’s most wonderful family shows before Disney became entangled in controversial political drama. It was originally an animated film in 1991 and became so popular that Disney adapted it into a Broadway stage musical in 1994. That version of the enchanting tale, written by Linda Woolverton, is now in a spectacular revival at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

## Made for the Theater

Masterfully directed and choreographed by Amber Mak, in keeping with the original direction by Robert Jess Roth, this show is an imaginative treat. But this isn’t just a cartoonish presentation meant for an audience of little ones. Indeed, the Chicago Shakespeare Theater has spared no expense in making this a lavish theatrical gem.

The dazzling set design by Jeffrey D. Kmic frames the stage with giant leather-bound books, one of which reads “La Belle et la Bête.” That’s the title of the 1740 fairytale by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve, from which Disney adapted “Beauty and the Beast.” That storybook motif continues as a book is spotlighted on center stage, waiting to be opened by a little boy whose action begins the musical. The pages of the book, which are projected on a back wall by Mike Tutaj, are turned to reveal the inner rooms of the Beast’s castle. Right from the start, it’s obvious that this carefully, elegantly designed show is not just for children, especially as the more mature members of the audience hollered and clapped their approval right along with the kids.

The ingenious and lavish costume designs by Theresa Ham are truly fantastic. It’s not an easy task to transform real people into life-sized inanimate objects, but she succeeds in turning



▲ Audrey Hare and Jason Michael Evans lead the cast of the Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s production of Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast.”



▲ Lumiere (Christopher Kale Jones, L) and Chip (Layla Joan), in Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast.”

**This carefully, elegantly designed show is not just for children.**

“Be Our Guest.” Indeed, the showstopper is “Be Our Guest,” in which the entire cast high-kicks a spirited can-can dance reminiscent of the 1930s’ Busby Berkeley extravagant film choreography.

Of course, the production is impressive because of its enthusiastic feature performances. Audrey Hare is an engaging Belle, the kindly young girl who takes care of her father and loves books. David Sajewich makes for a hilarious Gaston, the local stud who struts on stage and is so narcissistic and egotistic that he can’t believe that Belle, whom he chases only because she’s the most beautiful girl in town, isn’t interested in him. And a commanding Jason Michael Evans is the terrifying Beast who comes across as gruff and lacking in compassion, but who really has a warm heart buried beneath a cold exterior.

If you want to introduce your children to a musical that offers a powerful moral as to the importance of not judging people by outside appearances, and if you want an inspirational family experience, this is the musical to see. Indeed, as of this summer, this irresistible “Beauty and the Beast” is the best show in town.

*As an arts writer and movie/theater/opera critic, Betty Mohr has been published in the Chicago Sun-Times, The Chicago Tribune, The Australian, The Dramatist, the SouthtownStar, the Post Tribune, The Herald News, The Globe and Mail in Toronto, and other publications.*

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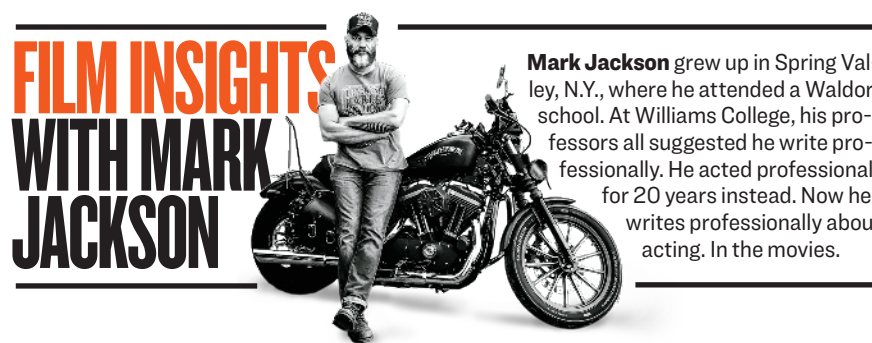
train several champion boxers, none more famous than boxing’s only undefeated heavyweight champion, Rocky Marciano. The future champion luckily landed with Goldman; otherwise, he would have been ignored or had his basics altered completely.

Speaking with his assistant Angelo Dundee, who would go on to train Muhammad Ali, Goldman said of Marciano: “I gotta guy who’s short, stoop-shouldered, balding, got two left feet and, God, how he can punch.”

Goldman forced Marciano to work his left jab and hook by tying his right hand behind his back. To establish better footwork, he tied a rope to each ankle so that when he would overextend himself on a punch, he would fall. Goldman never focused on Marciano’s grace in the ring (of which he hardly had any), but rather on his brute force and inextinguishable stamina.

Goldman would continue training into the 1960s. He was inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame in 1992.

*Dustin Bass is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast.*



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

## Dreams Deferred

A heartwarming tale of 2 brothers in a band

By Mark Jackson

Chances are, you’ve heard of the Everly Brothers, but it’s a safe bet that you’ve never heard of the Emerson Brothers. Based on the true story of brothers Donnie (Casey Affleck) and Joe (Walton Goggins) Emerson, a musical duo who bloomed early but whose ship came in much, much later, “Dreamin’ Wild” is a low-key, rather dull, yet paradoxically well-acted music movie with a heartwarming message.

Growing up in Washington state on the family farm in the 1970s, their teenage selves—young Donnie (Noah Jupe) and Joe (Jack Dylan Grazer)—have a passion for making music. Donnie, the main talent, is a gifted guitar player and singer-songwriter. Older brother Joe, their drummer, enjoys the creativity but is basically along for the ride.

**After years of toiling in the trenches, the brothers enjoy long-awaited success.**

**If You Build It, Record Sales Will Happen** Farmer-dad Don Sr. (Beau Bridges) financially supports his boys by building them a fairly sophisticated recording

studio “out past the cornfields where the woods got heavy,” replete with red shag rug on the walls as sound dampeners. He bequeaths them time to create music, along with an excellent pep talk about giving it their best shot.

The boys released their only record, “Dreamin’ Wild,” in the late 1970s. It was a remarkably beautiful album that, ostensibly due to lack of marketing chops, just couldn’t find an audience and was quickly destined for the one-hit-wonder, clearance-bin fate of the majority of America’s musical-career attempts. Dad went all in financing everything for his boys’ success and took a major hit when things didn’t work out. Fast-forwarding to the present day,

## POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

# Real Courage of a Baseball Pitcher

Monty Stratton overcame serious odds to play his game

By Rudolph Lambert Fernandez

Director Sam Wood begins his film with a brief text of tribute: “This is the true story of a young American—Monty Stratton—and it starts one fall afternoon, near Wagner, Texas.” For that heartwarming tale, writer Douglas Morrow won the Academy Award for Best Motion Picture Story.

Washed-up baseball catcher Barney Wile (Frank Morgan) makes the catch of a lifetime in talent-spotting young pitcher Monty Stratton (James Stewart). Monty makes the catch of a lifetime, too, falling for and marrying Ethel (June Allyson). Their romance blossoms because Ethel is invariably in the stands cheering for him as he trains, shows up in tryouts, and competes in big games.

That Monty is the catch of a lifetime becomes clear as his star in the American League rises. That Ethel is the catch of a lifetime becomes clear when his star falls, and he plunges into self-loathing after losing one leg to a freak gun injury. Heroically, Ethel, supported by Monty’s mother (Agnes Moorehead) and adoring fans, comforts and cheers him on his road to recovery.

Wood’s scenes of baseball minutiae may not enthrall film fans who aren’t also baseball fans. So, Stewart and Allyson hold up the dramatic core, supported by screenwriters Guy Trosper and George Wells who pack the dialogue with perceptive exchanges.

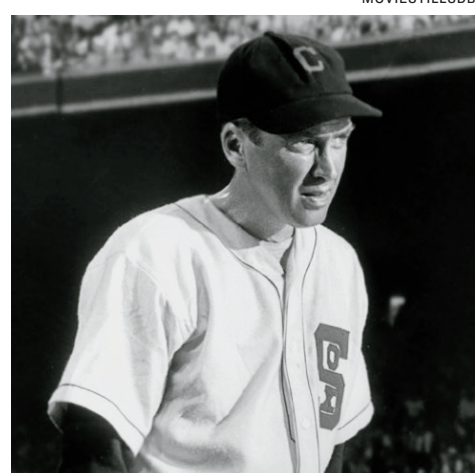
When a doctor warns a trembling Ethel that amputation is unavoidable, offering

her the fateful choice “his leg or his life,” she pleads, “But his legs are his life.”

For his role, Stewart perfected his pitching action by spending time with Monty himself and with league players. He consulted orthopedists and used a steel harness to ensure that his limp was convincing enough.

Watch Stewart as Monty, on his very first date, hinting at probable incompatibility given Ethel’s ignorance of and indifference to baseball. His eyes soften when she says, “I could learn.”

Jhan Robbins’s biography of Stewart poignantly confirms what Monty had said: “When I first saw Jimmy on the screen, I wept. He was more me than I am!” Allyson’s sunny smile isn’t the only reason she’s right for the role. Before she be-



▲ Monty Stratton (James Stewart), in “The Stratton Story.”

So when Sullivan tracks down the long-forgotten duo, he happily informs the family that the boys’ long-dead album has been brought back to life. The boys—now middle-aged men—have been resurrected as an unearthed and buzzed-about underground band, and Sullivan is convinced that success, at long last, is ripe for the picking.

“Dreamin’ Wild” hits a high point when middle-aged Donnie hears his music compared to something his musical hero said. The sweet disbelief written all over the haunting and mournful face of Casey Affleck, younger brother of Ben, is powerful.

## Brother to Brother

Everyone’s obviously ecstatic except Donnie, although he plays along. Donnie’s got a lifetime of frustrated-musician demons he’s dealing with. He resents his lesser-talent brother, who gave up music long ago, falling all over himself with glee at the sudden windfall of success, while he, Donnie, had been toiling in the trenches for decades.

Donnie forgets, however, that Joe gave up music in the same way that Leonardo DiCaprio’s character in “Titanic” gave up the life raft to Kate Winslet’s character and sank into the freezing abyss: Joe wanted Donnie’s solo career not to be hindered by his own insignificant talent.

And so Affleck’s character’s displeased outbursts regarding getting the band back together eventually

grate a little bit, not due to Affleck’s performance but because of a slightly subpar script. Thankfully, Joe gets his just due and actually becomes the hidden gem and the true heart of “Dreamin’ Wild.”

This point is best underscored when Donnie tells his brother about how he stayed up all night listening to the album they made, listening intently for what it might be—that ineffable *something*—that made the current crop of musical critics eulogize their album as magical. Because Donnie actually doesn’t feel he did anything that special. And then it dawns on him—Joe is the source of the magic. Joe’s selfless heart shining through, regardless of talent, is the album’s life source. It’s one of the most touching brother-to-brother tributes in film.

## ‘Dreamin’ Wild’

**Director**

Bill Pohlad

**Starring**

Casey Affleck, Walton Goggins, Beau Bridges, Zoey Deschanel, Chris Messina, Noah Jupe, Jack Dylan Grazer

**Running Time**

1 hour, 51 minutes

**MPAA Rating**

PG

**Release Date**

Aug. 4, 2023

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS



▲ Donnie Emerson (Noah Jupe) and Joe Emerson (Jack Dylan Grazer) are brothers who form a band, in “Dreamin’ Wild.”

can almost touch her. She walks toward him to cheer him up, but only some of the way. She then returns because he must walk the rest of the way alone.

Early in the film, Wood inserts a pointer to Ethel’s fidelity.

At one point when Monty is putting himself down, Ethel clarifies that it doesn’t matter to her whether he’s in the big leagues or not, as long as he’s enjoying his game and staying true to himself.

When the couple are trying their hand at dancing, Monty has just taken dancing lessons to impress Ethel and asks if she’s game enough to support him as he takes his first steps: “You think you can stick with me?” Meaningfully, even without her knowing that she’d have to soon support more than a few of his steps in their lives ahead, Ethel replies, “Oh, I’ll stick with you.”

*You can watch on YouTube, Vudu, Prime Video, and AppleTV.*

*Rudolph Lambert Fernandez is an independent writer who writes on pop culture.*

## ‘The Stratton Story’

**Director**

Sam Wood

**Starring**

June Allyson, James Stewart, Agnes Moorehead, Frank Morgan

**Running Time**

1 hour, 46 minutes

**MPAA Rating**

Not Rated

**Release Date**

May 12, 1949

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## HISTORY

# Israel ‘Charley’ Goldman: The Boxer’s Corner Man

Profiles in history of those who shaped our world

By Dustin Bass

Born in Warsaw, Israel “Charley” Goldman (1888–1968) arrived in America with his Polish parents at a very young age.

PUBLIC DOMAIN



▲ Charley Goldman (R) training boxer Al McCoy, 1910. Bain News Service, publisher. Library of Congress.

The short kid from the Red Hook section of Brooklyn, New York, grew up with clenched fists. His fighting days were primarily during a time when it was illegal to box in the Empire State.

Before 1896, boxing was illegal, but the short-lived Horton Law legalized it until complaints of fixed fights and ring fatalities forced the state legislature to repeal it. From 1900 to 1911, boxing was relegated to chartered athletic clubs and could be patronized only by members of said club.

Club owners, trainers, and boxers, however, worked to circumvent the law by establishing their own “clubs” to host fights. Instead of buying tickets, patrons simply paid “membership dues,” which enabled them to attend the fights and bet on them. For Goldman, who relied on boxing as a career, especially since he dropped out of school in the fourth grade, the circumvention was a neces-

sity. Many of his fights took place in the back of bars, but at the age of 15 he made the decision to turn professional.

Though his record from 1904 to 1914 was officially 36-6-11 along with 84 no-decisions, as he boxed during a time before judges’ scorecards, he claimed to have fought anywhere between 300 and 400 fights. One of those fights he recalled lasted 42 rounds before the police arrived, scattering everyone, including the promoter who had the money. To look at his face, specifically his nose, there is hardly any doubt that many of those fights went too long.

## Boxing Trainer

Goldman later became a trainer and found great success in his methodology of never changing the basics of a fighter but merely improving on what the fighter could already do. He would



REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

# Francis Ford Coppola's Descent Into a Cinematic Abyss

A documentary about making 'Apocalypse Now'

By Michael Clark

There haven't been many feature films made about other films (fewer than 10), and the only one worth the investment of your time is "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse" ("Hearts of Darkness").

Upon arriving in the Philippines in 1976 to begin filming "Apocalypse Now," director Francis Ford Coppola asked his wife, Eleanor, to shoot a "behind-the-scenes" visual diary.

However, 11 years after the 1979 release of "Apocalypse Now," Ms. Coppola turned over her footage to upstart filmmakers George Hickenlooper and Fax Bahr, who then augmented and added to what she had shot with then present-day interviews with cast members (Martin Sheen, Sam Bottoms, Laurence Fishburne, Albert Hall, Dennis Hopper, Frederic Forrester, and Robert Duvall), as well as original director George Lucas, screenwriter John Milius, assorted producers and technical personnel, and Mr. and Mrs. Coppola themselves.

The opening scene in "Hearts of Darkness" shows Mr. Coppola at a news conference stating that his new movie isn't about Vietnam; it is Vietnam. This bluster proclamation flies directly in the face of comments from Mr. Coppola in the upcoming months of filming when he is increasingly, one might say, "humbled."

As the production of "Apocalypse Now" progresses (scheduled for 16 weeks but ultimately lasting 238 days), we witness Mr. Coppola going through a series of intense self-doubt meltdowns wherein he states emphatically that his \$20 million movie (initially budgeted at \$12 million) is a complete and utter disaster. The fi-

nal budget turned out to be \$31 million (\$130.2 million in 2023 dollars).

## Adaptations

One of the more interesting facets of "Hearts of Darkness" is the inclusion of the performance history of previous adaptations based on the original novel on which "Apocalypse Now" is based: the 1899 novella "Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad.

The most fascinating of these adaptations was the November 1938 Mercury Theater Radio broadcast written and narrated by Orson Welles. Due to probable cost overruns, RKO canceled the production, and Welles instead made "Citizen Kane." Ms. Coppola took dozens of his audio clips from the broadcast and repurposed them as narration throughout "Hearts." "Apocalypse Now" financiers United Artists had to pick up the tab due to Mr. Coppola's many overruns. As we soon find out, money was the least of his concerns.

After viewing the dailies from the first week, Mr. Coppola and co-producer Fred Roos made the tough decision to fire lead Harvey Keitel and replace him with Mr. Sheen, thus making everything filmed up to that point useless. During production, Mr. Sheen (then 36) suffered a heart attack and couldn't return to work for three weeks, forcing Mr. Coppola to shoot around him.

On more than one occasion, seasonal monsoons partially or completely damaged sets. One set was so wiped out that



▲ Francis Ford Coppola and his wife, Eleanor, at Cannes in "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse."

a key scene was scrapped entirely.

After agreeing to work for three weeks for a fee of \$1 million per week, Marlon Brando, who played rogue Army colonel Kurtz, first threatened not to show up at all while still keeping his \$1 million deposit. When he finally arrived, he was overweight, hadn't read "Heart of Darkness" as promised, demanded that his dialogue be changed daily and written on cue cards, and then changed the dialogue during filming.

Because the U.S. Army refused to assist Mr. Coppola in any way, he ended up making a deal with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos to rent his army's helicopters. As shooting took place during a rebel insurgency, Mr. Marcos would without notice regularly commandeer some or all of the helicopters, leaving Mr. Coppola in the lurch.

## A Classic

In watching the theatrical first cut of the film, there's no indication whatsoever of a troubled production. Upon release, "Apocalypse Now" was deemed by most critics as an instant classic and remains one of the most revered movies of all time.

On the website Rotten Tomatoes, it has a 98 percent critics rating and a 94 percent

audience score. It received three Golden Globe Awards, two Oscars, and won the coveted Palme d'Or Award at the 1979 Cannes Film Festival.

"Hearts of Darkness" more than accomplishes what it set out to do: portray Mr. Coppola as a man who suffers the same doubts and insecurities as the rest of us (with Mr. Coppola's on a monumentally larger scale). He was able to see his vision through to completion while exceeding any and all expectations, including his own.

"Apocalypse Now" is one of the greatest filmmaking accomplishments in the history of cinema, and his wife's tribute to him is equally as inspirational and uplifting.

Bully for both of them.

*The film is available on multiple incarnations of home video and streaming on YouTube and Apple TV+, and is available on DVD and Blu-ray.*

*Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael Clark has provided film content to over 30 print and online media outlets. He co-founded the Atlanta Film Critics Circle in 2017 and is a weekly contributor to the Shannon Burke Show on FloridaManRadio.com. Since 1995, Mr. Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles. He favors dark comedy, thrillers, and documentaries.*

## 'Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse'

### Documentary

**Directors**  
Eleanor Coppola, George Hickenlooper, Fax Bahr

**Running Time**  
1 hour, 36 minutes

**MPAA Rating**  
R

**Release Date**  
Nov. 27, 1991

★★★★★

TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words



“

I try to create a beautiful, uplifting, or thoughtful experience in order to reconnect us to our spirituality.

Sharon Kilarski  
Arts and Culture Editor

# The Best of the Human Experience

Dear Epoch VIP,

If you're at all like me, you know that it can be ugly out there. You read about it in the news, watch it on the screen, and maybe even see it out your window. And it seems worse lately—depressing. That's where The Epoch Times steps in.

**Ever since its creation, The Epoch Times has featured an arts and culture section that acknowledges the importance of the truly beautiful**—whether beautiful in a physical sense or a moral one, and we continue that mission today.

And as the Arts and Culture editor, the mission is at the center of how I run my section.

In keeping with our motto of Truth and Tradition, we aim to present the best and noblest that human culture has to offer. By exploring the best craftsmanship in the world, we acknowledge that diligence, hard work, and patience produce excellence. In reviewing films, we search for those that are actually good for the soul, or, conversely, we point out where they have failed in this regard. By looking to our heritage for historical, literary, and mythical figures, we seek those with outstanding character and virtues to offer as exemplars to emulate. And by looking to the classics in music, the performing arts, and fine arts, we find themes that emphasize dignity, uprightness, harmony, and purity to inspire us.

In a sense, traditional art, stemming from traditional culture and values, aims at the heart and can speak

to us in surprising ways—as though we are having a conversation with a dear and trusted friend.

And just as conversations with a friend will sometimes touch on pain, the traditional arts not only capture the breath of human experience but its depth as well, allowing us to recognize our sins and frailties, and transforming humanity's inevitable pain to give that pain meaning. It is the beauty of the classics that carry out this alchemy.

Most importantly, I believe that art has traditionally been a link to the sacred, as a way to remind us of purpose on earth. **As the late philosopher Roger Scruton wrote, "True art is an appeal to our higher nature, an attempt to affirm that other kingdom in which moral and spiritual order prevails."**

That our society today has forgotten this purpose is all the more reason that each week, as editor of Arts and Culture, I try to create a beautiful, uplifting, or thoughtful experience in order to reconnect us to our spirituality.

I'm continuing to find paintings, stories, and remarkable figures that astonish me and I hope they will affect you, dear reader, too. I hope you will enjoy the Arts and Culture section, and that it can help you step away for a moment from the violent, cynical, demonic, immodest, insulting, and tasteless. I hope our content leaves you refreshed and anticipating the next issue.

In Truth and Tradition,

Sharon Kilarski  
The Epoch Times

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