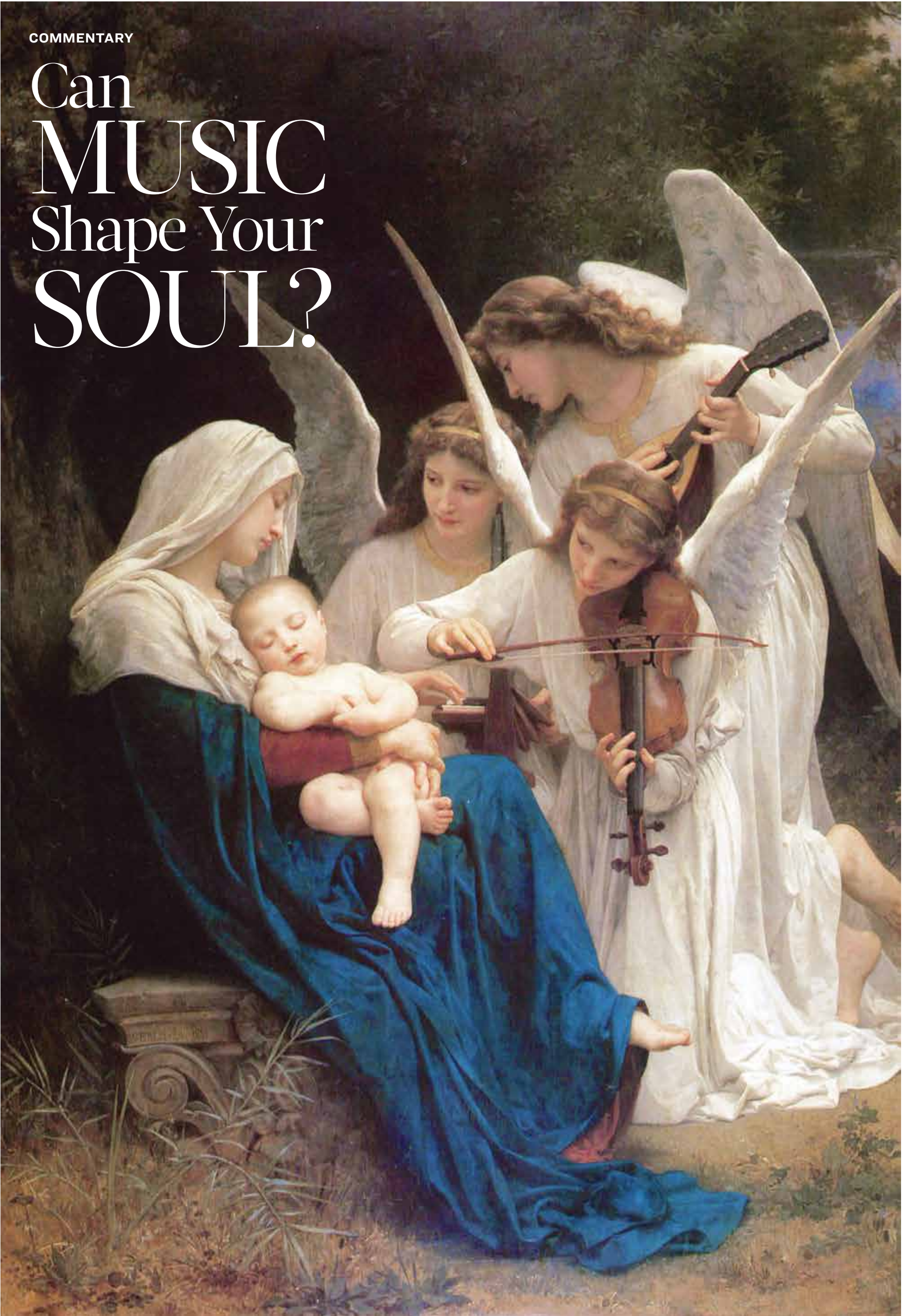


THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & TRADITION

PUBLIC DOMAIN





Some music soothes the soul. “Song of the Angels,” 1881, by William Adolphe Bouguereau.

JANI ALLAN

Music expresses the quintessence of life and its events. It is precisely this universality that gives music the high worth that it has as a panacea for our woes.

Recently, while in New York, I hailed a cab. The entire vehicle was pulsating with a Jay-Z track. The thumping was so loud that my heart started to feel like a beatbox. When the fillings in my teeth felt as though they were becoming dislodged, I begged to be let out.

Sound is a form of energy. Energy can build or destroy. More than 20 years ago, Dr. Masaru Emoto, a Japanese scientist, began researching the effect that sound has on water. After playing various kinds of music over water, he flash-froze the water molecules in petri dishes. When they were placed under a microscope, one could see the difference between the crystals that had been formed in the droplets of liquid when Bach, Mozart, and heavy rock had been played. Each piece of music had caused crystals to form in completely different constellations. The first two created geometrically intricate and marvelously symmetrical shapes. The water responded to heavy rock by showing no organization, merely chaos.

Given that most living matter consists of flu-

id—our bodies are 60 percent water—we, too, are affected by the sounds we hear.

What the Ancients Thought About Music

In his “Republic,” Plato tells another ancient philosopher, Glaucon, that “musical training is a more potent instrument than any other because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily train, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful, or of him who is ill-educated, ungraceful.”

Plato averred that this training was the true education of the “inner being.” For this reason, one so trained would most “shrewdly perceive omissions or faults in art and nature,” and with a true taste, would “praise and rejoice over and receive into his soul the good.”

In short, he would become noble and good.

Plato also observed the effect that music had on society in his day.

Music, he said, is a moral law. He observed that it “gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, gaiety and life to everything; it is the essence of order and lends to all that is good, just and beautiful.”

The wrong music is full of danger to the whole state.

Aristotle said that since music communicates emotion, immoral music can shape our character for the worse. One becomes imbued with the same passion as the music to which one listens. “If over a long time he habitually listens to music that rouses ignoble passions, his whole character will be shaped to an ignoble form.”

According to researchers at the University of Missouri, hip-hop, rap, and pop music promotes problematic behaviors. They analyzed the lyrics of more than 400 Bill-

board hits released between 2006 and 2016 for themes of violence, profanity, misogyny, and gender-role references.

Professor Cynthia Frisby suggests that parents have discussions with their teens about what they are listening to and how it is impacting their identity. A respondent to the story cautioned: “Besides violence and aggression, overtones of control and possessiveness (e.g. “You’re mine”, “Never gonna let you go”) and emotional blackmail (“Can’t live without you”) are all too common and seem to go unquestioned. Yet it is often those very attitudes that lead to violence and abuse.”

Music is like religion. It is never neutral in its spiritual direction.

It is said that ultimately, all uses of tone and musical lyrics can be classified according to their spiritual direction: upward or downward.

Think of the Gregorian chants and how perfectly they reflect the architecture of the cathedrals in which they were sung.

Consider the majesty of Handel’s “Messiah”; its noble purpose was the glorification of the Highest God. Spiritually, it elevates the listener.

As long as sublime and beautiful music prevails, so will civilization flourish, both spiritually and in material aspects.

Jani Allan is a South African journalist, columnist, writer, and broadcaster.



Detail of a tapestry showing a psalterist played with a quill.

LITERATURE

Five Famous Shakespeare Quotes You’re Probably Taking Out of Context



PATIENCE GRISWOLD

Shakespeare is often quoted in a way that makes him sound like his works were incredibly serious and philosophical. While it is true that Shakespeare interacts with deep and compelling themes, and some of his plays do have a very somber tone, it’s interesting to see how many of his oft-quoted lines actually appear in moments of comic relief. Perhaps we would be wise to take more of these comic lines to heart ... in their proper context.

1 ‘Though she be but little, she is fierce.’

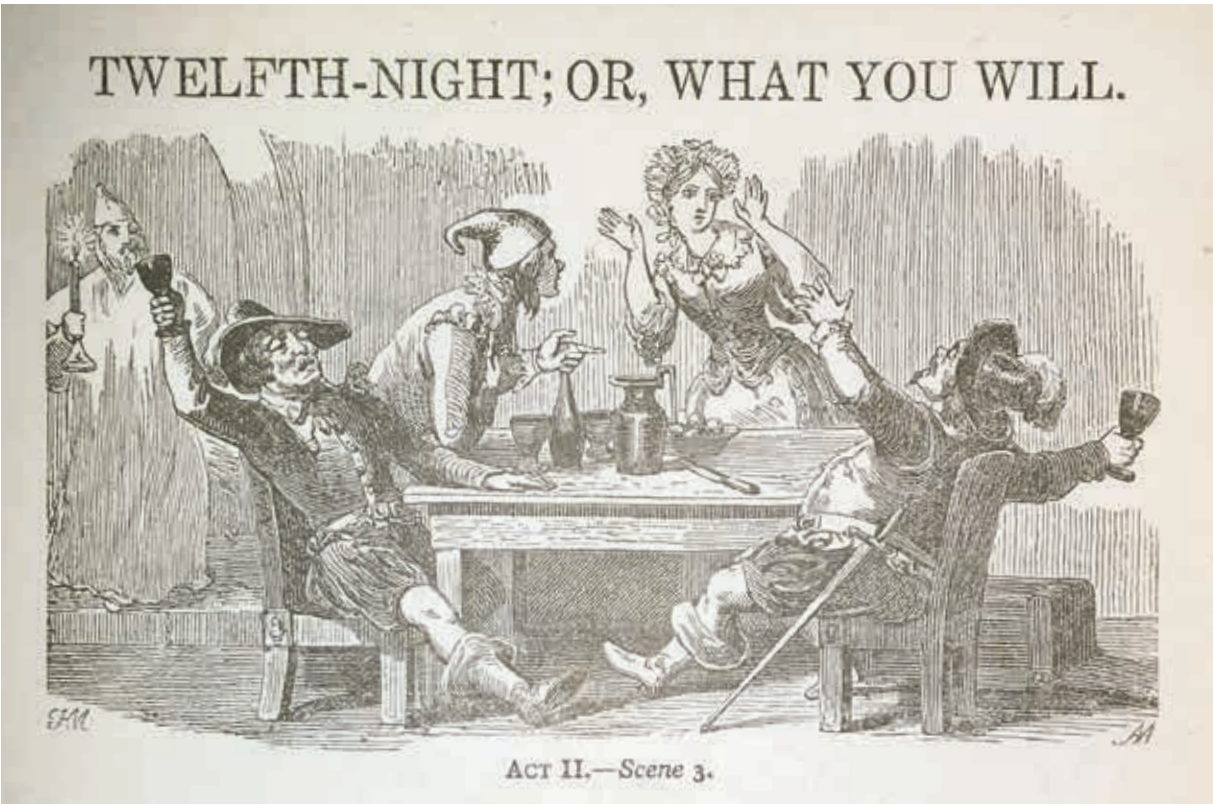
For the sake of full disclosure, I have this quote on a coffee tumbler. Taken from Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” it’s often used as something of a compliment when it appears on decor. In context, however, this line was certainly intended as an insult.

Thanks to some moonlight madness and fairy juice, four lovers find themselves mixed up and in love with the wrong people. When Hermia realizes that the man she loves is suddenly in love with Helena, things get a little violent between the two ladies. Helena entreats the protection of others, exclaiming, “When she is angry she is keen and shrewd. She was a vixen when she went to school, and though she be but little, she is fierce.”

2 ‘Be not afraid of greatness.’

This quote comes from “Twelfth Night” and is arguably the funniest moment in any of Shakespeare’s plays. Malvolio (whose name literally means “ill will”) is a surly, pompous household steward who enjoys bossing the other servants around and reprimanding Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, both of whom outrank him. In retaliation, Toby, Andrew, Maria, and Feste band together to play a prank on Malvolio. The four forge their Lady’s handwriting and write him a letter in which “Olivia” professes her undying love for Malvolio, telling him, “In my stars I am above thee, but be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon ‘em.”

And yes, when performed, the eavesdropping characters have fun “acting out” that line. I’ll leave it to your imagination.



3 ‘Discretion is the better part of valor.’

Taken from Shakespeare’s “Henry IV, Part 1,” this quote might be more compelling if it were not uttered from the mouth of Falstaff, one of the most comical (and occasionally crass) characters in Shakespeare’s canon. It doesn’t help that the reason for Falstaff’s observation on valor is that he is attempting to get credit for someone else’s act of heroism on the battlefield.

4 ‘All the world’s a stage.’

This is another line uttered by one of Shakespeare’s more comical characters. In “As You Like It,” Jacques is a rather pessimistic and unpleasant fellow, often going out of his way to throw cold water on his companions’ (sometimes unwarranted) exuberance. When the exiled Duke, who has decided to make the most of his time hiding in the forest, observes that they are not alone in their misfortunes, and the “universal theater presents more woeful pageants than the scene wherein we play,” Jacques responds by observing that all the world’s a stage, and then details the meaningless trajectory of

A lithograph image depicting a scene from Twelfth-Night.

each life on that stage.

5 ‘If music be the food of love play on!’

This quote is also from “Twelfth Night” and happens to be from another character who has a thing for Olivia. Or at least, that’s what he says. Count Orsino claims to be madly in love with Olivia, but in his “If music be the food of love” speech, he almost completely forgets to mention the woman he claims to be obsessed with. As the story unfolds, Orsino seems to be more in love with the idea of being in love than anything else.

Nearly every high school graduate in America has read at least one Shakespeare play. But even those who have not are quick to quote Shakespeare, since doing so is an easy way to instantly sound credible and cultured. The funny thing is, some of Shakespeare’s most famous and quoted lines are completely taken out of context.

This article, “Five Famous Shakespeare Quotes You’re Probably Taking Out of Context,” was originally published on Intellectual Takeout by Patience Griswold.

THE
EPOCH
TIMES

TRUTH and TRADITION

A NEWSPAPER GEORGE WASHINGTON WOULD READ

The very fabric of America is under attack—our freedoms, our republic, and our constitutional rights have become contested terrain. The Epoch Times, a media committed to truthful and responsible journalism, is a rare bastion of hope and stability in these testing times.

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The Root of Our TROUBLES

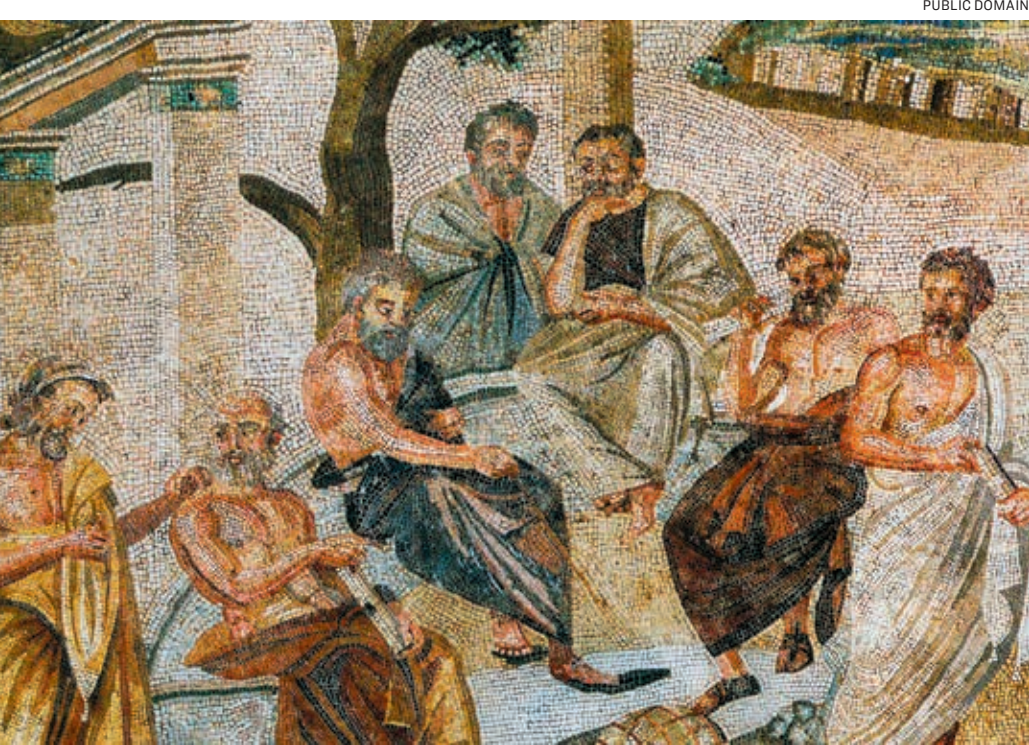
At the heart of Original Sin is the temptation to 'be like God.'



A 19th-century neoclassical statue of the philosopher Plato outside the Academy of Athens, in Greece.

Plato surrounded by students in his Academy in Athens. Mosaic (detail) from the Villa of T. Siminius Stephanus, Pompeii, first century B.C. National Archaeological Museum, Naples.

NICE_MEDIA_PRODUCTION/SHUTTERSTOCK



PUBLIC DOMAIN

says that they are cursed oligarchs.

Yes, I said; and loyal citizens are insultingly termed by her slaves who hug their chains and men of naught; she would have subjects who are like rulers, and rulers who are like subjects: These are men after her own heart, whom she praises and honors both in private and public. Now, in such a State, can liberty have any limit?

By degrees the anarchy finds a way into private houses and ends by getting among the animals and infecting them.

I mean that the father grows accustomed to descend to the level of his sons and to fear them, and the son is on a level with his father, he having no respect or reverence for either of his parents; and this is his freedom, and [non-citizen] is equal with the citizen and the citizen with the [non-citizen], and the stranger is quite as good as either.

And these are not the only evils, I said—there are several lesser ones: In such a state of society the master fears and flatters his scholars, and the scholars despise their masters and tutors; young and old are all alike; and the young man is on a level with the old, and is ready to compete with him in word or deed; and old men condescend to the young and are full of pleasantries and gaudy; they are loath to be thought morose and authoritative, and therefore they adopt the manners of the young.

The last extreme of popular liberty is when the slave bought with money, whether male or female, is just as free as his or her purchaser, nor must I forget to tell of the liberty and equality of the two sexes in relation to each other.

And above all, I said, and as the result of all, see how sensitive the citizens become; they chafe impatiently at the least touch of authority and at length, as you know, they cease to care even for the laws, written or unwritten; they will have no one over them.

How true of our times are Plato's words? Whether we want to call it Original Sin or the spirit of Democratic Man, we have watched everything Plato described happen. Is not his last sentence an apt description of political and cultural discourse in our times?

And above all... see how sensitive the citizens become; they chafe impatiently at the least touch of authority and at length, as you know, they cease to care even for the laws, written or unwritten; they will have no one over them.

They will have no one over them; they will be like God.

If you agree that that sentence describes our times, then I would argue it is the impulse of Original Sin, the desire to be like God that infects our times and ties together the social chaos. All of the "isms" are merely ways to rationalize and make possible one's self-actualization, one's desire to become like God.

And if that is truly at the root of our current travails, our times do not end well unless there is a great awakening.

No ideology, law, or tradition can adequately beat back the toxin in our collective system. At the end of the day, we must admit that we are in a spiritual battle. Either man will be like God or we will humble ourselves and live in accordance with reality.

This article, "The Root of Our Troubles," was originally published on IntellectualTakeout.org by Devin Foley, the co-founder and chief executive of Intellectual Takeout.

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Our times will not end well unless there is another Great Awakening. "George Whitefield Preaching in Bolton, June 1750" by Thomas Walley.

DEVIN FOLEY

Like you, I'm horrified by the exponential growth in social chaos and totalitarian impulses ravaging our country. It seems as though nothing makes sense; there isn't a unifying cause tying together the upheaval of American culture. Of course, that's the nature of chaos, right?

Is it Neo-Liberalism, Cultural Marxism, Feminism, Capitalism, Socialism, Fascism? None of those "isms" quite fit the bill.

To better understand what's happening, it may be worth digging deep into the canon of Western civilization, specifically "Genesis" and then Plato's "Republic."

In "Genesis," we find the old story of Adam and Eve, those first humans created by God according to the traditions of Judaism and Christianity. (Let us for now set aside any debate over creationism and evolution. We're not here for that right now; we're here to gain wisdom and understanding from the literature of the past.)

As anyone familiar with the story of Adam and Eve knows, they were created perfectly and without sin, by God, who situated them in the Garden of Eden. They walked with God, wanted for nothing, and overall seemed to have quite the perfect existence.

There was only one rule they had to obey:

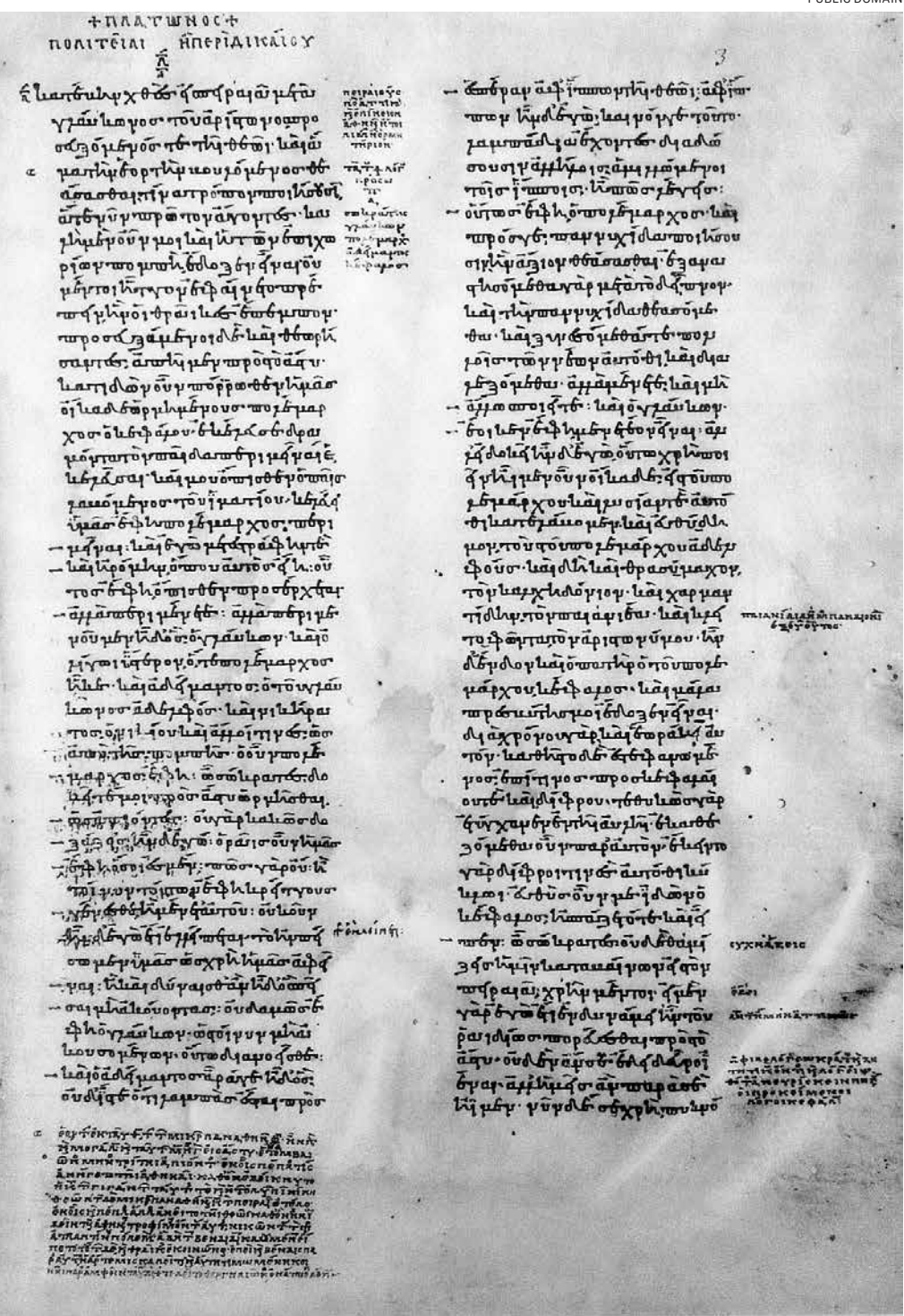
And the Lord God commanded the man [Adam], saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

For a while it appears that Adam and Eve obeyed the rule, but then the serpent came along.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Culturally, our elites have rejected the ideas of natural law, God's laws, man's laws, and even the laws of biology and reality.

The title page of the oldest manuscript of Plato's "Republic," late ninth century, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1807.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Well, we know how the story ends. Eve takes a bite of the forbidden fruit and then gets Adam to do the same. Nothing is the same after that moment. Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden, punished to toil and work the rest of their lives, and to end in death. It is a curse passed on to all subsequent generations.

At the heart of Original Sin is the temptation to "be like God." One wonders if we aren't dealing with the same impulse today, though writ large.

Culturally, our elites have rejected the ideas of natural law, God's laws, man's laws, and even the laws of biology and reality. Many of our leaders burn with the desire to have no authority over them, to "be like God."

Overall, as a society we have been influenced by our elite to embrace the same lust for power, like God, to self-actualize. Do you want to live a certain way? If it's your truth, that's just fine. No one or thing should stand in your way. Do you reject your biology and claim to be a nonbinary, wolf-kind? That's just fine, too. And when the reality of your biology gets in the way, science will be there to make the necessary physical changes to make possible your chosen self-actualization.

Consider even the appeal of Socialism today. In it, we find the idea that you are not free unless the government makes possible your desires. It actually makes sense. Many Americans have come to elevate the self above all else. It is their "god." When something exterior to the self comes in conflict with self-actualization, we do not reflect and wonder about the rightness or wrongness of our desires. Instead, we turn to the collective to remove that barrier.

Turning to Plato

While the ancient Greek philosopher Plato doesn't quote from "Genesis," he is actually even more pointed about the source of our social chaos. In Book VIII of "The Republic," Plato describes Democratic Man as "all liberty and equality."

That's quite a loaded statement that deserves to be unwrapped. Arguably, it is the metaphysics behind our embrace of relativism. If all people are free and equal to come up with their own truth, then there can be no truth. On the other hand, if we admit that there are truths that transcend our being, then we are confronted with the idea that we may have to subject ourselves to those transcendent truths, that there may be an external standard by which we are to measure ourselves.



(Left)
A flyer for the March 8 concert of Hector Berlioz's "Requiem."

(Right)
Conductor John Nelson with the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra, preparing "Les Troyens."



COURTESY OF JOHN NELSON

CLASSICAL MUSIC

BERLIOZ'S 'REQUIEM' SINCERITY RUNS THROUGH IT

An interview with conductor John Nelson



MARCO BORGROVE

Conductor John Nelson.

ROBERT HUGILL

Friday, March 8 was the 150th anniversary of the death of Hector Berlioz, and commemorations included a performance of his "Grande messe des morts (Requiem)" at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. John Nelson conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Choir, the Philharmonia Chorus, and tenor Michael Spyres.

I was lucky enough to be able to catch up with Nelson in a break from rehearsals to chat about Berlioz's "Requiem" and Nelson's other plans for performances of Berlioz this year.

The grandeur of the "Requiem" matches that of St. Paul's space, but acoustically the cathedral is not ideal, though those sitting under the rotunda would have gotten a good experience, Nelson said. When discussing the work, he pointed out that Berlioz himself highly regarded it. Toward the end of his life, Berlioz said that if one of his works survived, it would be that one.

Nelson feels that it is a work that needs to be considered not just for its obvious grandeur but also for its essence, the musical interpretation of the text. With the enormous number of musicians involved in the large space of St. Paul's Cathedral, with the four bands in the rotunda, Nelson agreed that the performance had indeed been impressive.

But beyond the sound quality, Nelson was also after the textual meaning of the "Requiem." While Berlioz was not religious, Nelson feels that he wrote sincerely. Berlioz was from a Roman Catholic family, and the memory of that is surely present in the work. Nelson finds a sincerity running through the entire piece.

Preparing for the Performance

The performance was livestreamed and recorded for DVD and CD by Warner Classics, as part of Nelson's on-going cycle of live Berlioz recordings, the most recent of which was "Les Troyens."

The idea for the performance arose after the performances of "Les Troyens" in Strasbourg. It was to commemorate in St. Paul's the 150th anniversary of Berlioz's death on that very day. The venue that had been used for Sir Colin Davis's performance of the "Requiem" with the London Symphony Orchestra in 2012.

Pulling the performance together proved a complex operation, yet possible. Though the cathedral was used as a concert hall infrequently, cathedral officials were sympathetic to the performance, and it proved possible to have Warner Classics record it and Medici TV livestream it. Also, the tenor Michael Spyres was free.

The acoustics in St. Paul's Cathedral made recording a challenge. Nelson feels lucky that the production team included the sound engineer who worked on Colin Davis's live recording of Berlioz's "Requiem" at St. Paul's (on the LSO Live label), as well as the French engineer who has worked on all of Nelson's other live Berlioz recordings.

For all the work's size, Berlioz was very exact in his specifications of the number of performers required for the "Requiem," and Nelson is pleased that the numbers they used came pretty close to Berlioz's specifications. The choir numbered 208 and Berlioz specified 210, while each section of strings had two players fewer than what Berlioz requested, and so there were 10 bass players instead of 12.

This exactitude is matched by the detail in Berlioz's score, which Nelson calls stunning. The work was written in 1837, only a decade after the death of Beethoven, who used few markings, in 1827, so Nelson finds the minutiae of the markings in the score remarkable. Berlioz gives little room for interpretation, as he knew what he wanted. Nelson feels obliged to follow these details, with only a couple of places where he thinks that Berlioz misjudged matters.

Pulling the performance together proved a complex operation.

Discovering Berlioz

Berlioz has been with Nelson for a long time, ever since he left music college. Nelson studied conducting at the Juilliard School with a French conducting teacher, who never once talked about Berlioz.

When Nelson graduated, a friend from college, Matthew Epstein, suggested he listen to the then new recording of Berlioz's "Les Troyens" conducted by Colin Davis, and Nelson found it stunning. "I thought I had never listened to music before," he said.

The opera had never had a complete performance in America, so with the confidence of youth, he and Epstein organized a performance of the complete, uncut "Les Troyens" at Carnegie Hall in 1972. Nelson was in his early 30s.

Two years later, Nelson was hired to assist Rafael Kubelik in the American premiere of the staged opera at The Metropolitan Opera. When Kubelik fell ill after the second performance, Nelson stepped into the pit with Christa Ludwig (as Dido) and Jon Vickers (as Aeneas) staring down at him.

And for Nelson, the rest is history: He was invited to conduct "Les Troyens" at the Grand Theater in Geneva, Switzerland, for his European debut, and many other invitations followed.

In the Future

This month, Nelson will be conducting performances of Berlioz's "La Damnation de Faust" with Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and soloists Michael Spyres, Joyce DiDonato, Nicolas Courjal, and Alexandre Duhamel, which will be recorded for release on Warner Classics.

Nelson has conducted "La Damnation de Faust" both as an opera and as a concert work. While Berlioz did not write the piece as an opera, he put in so many instructions that it seems as if it was meant for the stage, but Nelson prefers performing it in concert. This allows the audience to create their own images to accompany the music, and Nelson feels sure that this is what Berlioz intended.

Nelson will also be performing and recording Berlioz's "Roméo et Juliette," an interpretation of the story with little singing in it. Around a quarter is textual, and the rest is all orchestral so that the listener's imagination is induced by the music. It is not a conventional work. Nelson says that Berlioz did not think the way other composers did. He was something of an iconoclast, deliberately going against the norms, but there's a genuine sincerity in everything Berlioz wrote, even though some find the work extravagant.

In 2020, Nelson will be performing and recording "L'enfance du Christ," and there are also plans for "Symphonie fantastique," which he will be pairing with "Lélio." Berlioz wrote the latter as a sequel to the symphony, and though Nelson feels that it does not really hang together well, he thinks that it is important to include it with the symphony.

The recording of the "Requiem" will be out on Warner Classics in early autumn, with "La Damnation de Faust" in November, and "Roméo et Juliette" in 2020.

Robert Hugill is a composer, lecturer, journalist, and classical music blogger. He runs the classical music blog Planet Hugill, writes for the Opera Today website, and Opera Today and Opera magazines. He lectures and gives pre-concert talks on opera and classical music in London. As a composer, his disc of songs "Quickening" was issued by Navona Records in 2017. This article, edited for clarity, is reprinted with permission from Planet Hugill.

THEATER REVIEW

Strife in a Dublin Tenement

DIANA BARTH

NEW YORK—"Juno and the Paycock," the second play in the Irish Rep's season of three major Sean O'Casey works, is as powerful and moving as the recent presentation of "Shadow of a Gunman."

Ne'er-do-well "Captain" Jack Boyle, the Paycock, or peacock of the title (beautifully delineated by the Rep's producing director Ciaran O'Reilly), mostly absents himself from supporting his family by claiming weak legs. They become even weaker when faced with the possibility of a job.

Boyle spends most of his time prowling nearby pubs in the company of his buddy Joxer Daly (played to a T by wild-haired, intense John Keating).

So it's up to Jack's long-suffering wife, Juno (Maryann Plunkett, in an immensely moving portrayal), to hold down the fort. She is accompanied by their daughter Mary (a sensitive performance by Sarah Street) and

damaged son Johnny (Ed Malone). Johnny had fought in the Civil War, which still rages around them in the streets of Dublin. Not only did he lose an arm in the conflict, but he also is always on edge, apparently for some real, or imagined, guilt.

The ever-present war exerts tension in the household. Finances are worn thin. But a

CAROL ROSEGG



Ciaran O'Reilly as Jack Boyle, the Paycock, and Maryann Plunkett as Juno, in Sean O'Casey's "Juno and the Paycock."

bright light suddenly appears: The family is to be left an inheritance through the death of a distant cousin of Boyle's.

Rejoicing is expressed by the sudden spending surge that results in some garish new furniture (appropriately tacky scenic design by Charlie Corcoran) and a cherished gramophone.

However, bright lights do not flicker for long in the Boyle household. As the cousin's will was not worded accurately, the longed-for financial gain abruptly fizzles, and the Boyles are now besieged with angry creditors claiming their cash back, or their goods.

Literally taking the suit off Boyle's back is the tailor Needle Nugent (Robert Langdon Lloyd). Then there is neighbor Masie Madigan (Terry Donnelly in an always dependable vim-and-vigor performance), who seizes the gramophone as payment for a long-established debt.

As if things weren't bad enough, Charles Bentham (James Russell), a high-toned suitor

of Mary's, takes off for London, leaving Mary to bear the unwanted fruits of their relationship. This sad fact discourages the attentions of Jerry Devine (Harry Smith), a down-to-earth neighbor who had truly loved Mary—until now.

Tragedy and desolation ensue until the stage is virtually empty of everything, with no human life, no furnishings. When Boyle and Joxer stumble onstage, so numbed by alcohol are they that they cannot even grasp the supreme squalor and nothingness of their lives.

Director Neil Pepe, who has taken a brief leave from his position as artistic director of Off-Broadway's Atlantic Theater Company to helm this production, has done an excellent piece of work, contributing neatly to the Rep's long list of successful productions.

Diana Barth writes for various theatrical publications and for New Millennium. She may be contacted at diabarth99@gmail.com

'Juno and the Paycock'

Irish Repertory Theatre
132 W. 22nd St.

Tickets
212-727-2737

Running Time
2 hours, 15 minutes (including one intermission)

Closes
May 25

PAOLO ROSSELLI/STEFANO BODRI ARCHITECTS



FINE ARTS

Raphael's Masterpiece Is Restored

The 'School of Athens' cartoon is again on view in Milan

The new gallery for Raphael's cartoon of the "School of Athens," at the Ambrosiana Gallery in Milan, Italy.

LORRAINE FERRIER

Remarkably, one of the most recognizable works of art of the High Renaissance survives on two huge pieces of cardboard, comprising 210 sheets of paper in total. At 9 feet, 4 inches by 26 feet, 4 1/2 inches, the cartoon or preparatory drawing for Raphael's "School of Athens" was publicly unveiled on March 27, at the Ambrosiana Gallery in Milan, Italy, after four years of restoration.

"Philosophy" is the proper title for the "School of Athens" fresco. It was one of four frescoes commissioned by Pope Julius II in 1508 for the Room of the Segnatura in the Vatican, which the pontiff used as his library and private study. The three other frescoes depict "Theology (Disputation of the Holy Sacrament)," "Jurisprudence (The Virtues)," and "Poetry (Parnassus)."

The restored "Philosophy" cartoon can now be viewed in the exhibition "Il Raffaello dell'Ambrosiana. In principio il Cartone" ("Raphael of the Ambrosiana. The Original Cartoon"). On April 6, the 499th anniversary of Raphael's death, visitors at the Ambrosiana Gallery can view the astonishing cartoon for free.

The cartoon underwent extensive study in 2014 by the Venerable Ambrosiana Library, through the Cardinal Federico Borromeo Foundation, which led to its conservative restoration coordinated by a prestigious Scientific Committee. The restoration was directed and coordinated by Dr. Maurizio Michelozzi.

Not only has the actual artwork been restored, but the gallery space has also been redesigned and the cartoon frame remade. Visitors can now get closer to the artwork, with just a piece of glass separating them from the delicate marks made by the hand of Raphael.

What's wonderful about this particular piece of art is that not only is it completely hand-drawn by Raphael alone, a rarity in itself, but it is not a typical cartoon. Usually, a cartoon, derived from the Italian word "cartone" meaning paper, is a detailed preparatory drawing used to transfer an image in order to paint a fresco or make a tapestry.

A cartoon would have been transferred to a surface by applying a series of small pinpricks to it and then using charcoal or chalk to dab over the holes. Or chalk or charcoal could have been applied to the underside of the cartoon and a stylus used to indent or imprint the design onto the surface.

It makes sense then that, invariably, cartoons are not always in good condition—if they survive at all.

This transfer process did not happen to this cartoon. It was only ever meant to show the complete design to the pope.

Continued on Page 10

MAURIZIO MICHELOZZI/VENERABLE AMBROSIANA LIBRARY



MAURIZIO MICHELOZZI/VENERABLE AMBROSIANA LIBRARY



A cartoon is a detailed preparatory drawing used to transfer an image in order to paint a fresco.

1.—4. The drawing for Raphael's "School of Athens" took four years of intensive conservation to restore.



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.

FILM REVIEW

‘Dumbo’

Tim Burton’s CGI Fails to Remake Classic

MARK JACKSON

Disney’s 1941 classic, about a wee circus elephant baby with giant ears, whose mom’s name (Jumbo), along with the baby’s huge ears, got him automatically nicknamed “Dumbo,” was a classic for a reason: It had great pathos. It was sadder than “Bambi.”

This new 2019 Tim Burton update is an attempt to improve on a classic. That’s generally a very difficult thing to do. Let me think of an example of improving on a classic. Otis Redding’s song “Respect” was an instant classic by virtue of the fact that everything out of Otis’s mouth was an instant soul classic. Along came Aretha Franklin, who turned “Respect” into such a mega-hit that Otis himself, when he heard it for the first time, could do nothing but shake his head and say, “She done stole my song.”

Tim Burton, who was weird and interesting in his early career, now faces industry expectations of what the Tim Burton flavor and ingredients will be, but no amount of sprinkling of Burton-ness on this new “Dumbo” is able to improve on the classic whatsoever. Dumbo #1 was a case of Can’t Touch This.

The Story
In 1919, after World War I, soldier Holt Farrier (Colin Farrell), a former horse stunt rider, comes home to the Medici Bros. Circus, located in its winter home of Sarasota, Florida, missing a limb. His kids are slightly traumatized. Holt’s gotta



WALT DISNEY STUDIOS

figure out how to stay employed.

This circus has no actual Medici brethren, just a singular Max Medici (Danny DeVito), the harried owner and ringmaster, who’s trying hard to pull the circus out of a slump.

He’s hoping that his latest purchase, a pregnant elephant named Jumbo, will give birth to a crowd-pulling, cute beh-beh. Oops, the baby is deformed! Gah! It trips on its ears! Stupid Dumbo.

Lo and behold, Dumbo’s dad must’ve been a giant bat, because his mutant ears turn out to be wings. So Holt and his kids, Milly (Nico Parker, Thandie Newton’s mini-me daughter) and Joe (Finley Hobbins), become Dumbo’s caretakers and protectors.

Who does Dumbo need protection from? Kids who make fun of him, of course, and also slick, slimy, bleached-silver, nasty entertainment mogul V.A. Vandevere (Michael Keaton) and his futuristic, Coney-Island-on-steroids theme park.

Will Dumbo save the circus from certain demise? Will Holt fall in love with the slinky French trapeze artist (a vastly underused Eva Green) who Vandevere rescued from a life of questionable morality and who’s supposed to ride the aeronautical mini-pachyderm? Are your kids going to care?

The last question is the most important, and the answer is: You can take ‘em and force-feed ‘em this fluff, but in the same way that this realistic, CGI Dumbo has to flap his earwings really hard to get his 800 pounds airborne—your kids are not going to be terribly uplifted.

‘Dumbo’

Director
Tim Burton

Starring
Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito, Eva Green, Alan Arkin, Nico Parker

Running Time
1 hour, 52 minutes

Rated
PG

Release Date
March 29

★★★★☆

No amount of sprinkling of director Tim Burton-ness on this new ‘Dumbo’ is able to improve on the classic whatsoever.

What Can Your Kids Learn?
One of the ways this update tries to assimilate to (and bank on) current times is to cater to the vegan, animal activism crowd. Down with circus oppression of animals altogether!!! That’s good. I’m all for the liberation of oppressed animals. The humiliating clown face painted on little Dumbo is pretty tragic, in fact, as well as his being tricked into flying around the big top, sans safety net, before he’s even really mastered ear-flight.

However, “Dumbo” 2019’s utopian, setting-all-the-animals-free vision of a “Jungle Book”-type outcome is perhaps unrealistic. The vastly more powerful scene was the original, where Dumbo’s mother spanks some bullying audience boys with her trunk and then gets put in a cart and elephant-shamed with a sign saying “Danger Mad Elephant.”

Colin Farrell, whose acting has been exceptionally wooden ever since “Miami Vice,” is here posi-



GARETH CATTARMOLLE/GETTY IMAGES FOR DISNEY

(Left Page) The wee flying elephant Dumbo in “Dumbo.”

(Above) Finley Hobbins at the European premiere of Disney’s “Dumbo” in London on March 21, 2019.

(Left) Max Medici (Danny DeVito), owner of the Medici Bros. Circus, in “Dumbo.”

tively petrified, and even the normally brilliant Keaton is reduced to a small heap of Keaton-isms. Thandie Newton’s daughter appears to be soaked in teeny starlet imperiousness of I know I’m already a movie star. (Let’s give her the benefit of the doubt and say the character she’s playing appears to be spoiled.) And while Danny DeVito also displays the full range of DeVito ticks, his is the only character you’ll care about.

Dumbo’s eyes are an elephantine version of those of Alita from “Alita: Battle Angel”—outsized, photorealistic, and definitely very cute. But again, you really need to leave classics alone unless you know deep down that you can knock it out of the park. Burton’s patented creepiness, assortment of oddities, and the CGI steampunk-iness on display here can’t compete with the simple pen, ink, and paint of the original.

THEATER REVIEW

‘The Chaperone’

Is Chaperoning Worse Than Abortion?

MARK JACKSON

One of the best things about the quaint, slow-moving, sweet little movie “The Chaperone” is that it strongly conveys how difficult it must have been for vivacious, talented, headstrong individuals to remain in small American cities and towns (like Wichita, Kansas) back in the 1920s.

Sleepy backwaters, farm communities, and any-place USA, where people get married straight out of high school, go into the family business, and start making babies immediately—who can live within those confines? Plenty of folks. Most folks. It’s the life of simpler pleasures.

But these are the classic settings where Joseph Campbell’s Hero’s Journey usually begins. What’s a Hero’s Journey? The ancient Greeks saw human life as being lived in two different possible forms: You either live your entire life inside the village compound, or you go out on a Hero’s Journey.

The latter begins when you go outside the village compound to fetch some water at the well, hear the



Elizabeth McGovern in “The Chaperone.”

The Irony

The other thing “The Chaperone” reminds one of is the America before abortion was the norm, when out-of-wedlock fooling around resulted in many orphans. And when orphans were put on trains that stopped in small towns all across the land and were taken in by families.

And so “The Chaperone” tells the tale of Mrs. Norma Carlisle (Elizabeth McGovern), herself a former orphan, chaperoning the headstrong, 16-year-old Louise Brooks (Haley Lu Richardson, currently starring in the teen love story “Five Feet Apart”) from Wichita to New York City, so the girl can pursue her dancing Hero’s Journey. And avoid producing any orphans.

The film’s based on the more-or-less truthful novel, by Laura Moriarty, about the early career of Jazz age sensation Louise Brooks, who went on to become a silent-film star. In the film, Louise has been accepted into a prestigious New York modern dance school, but her father insists on adult supervision in the big city.

We assume that since Norma’s twin sons are now grown, she jumps on the escort job just to get the heck out of Dodge for a bit. However, Norma’s marriage contains a secret tragedy, and it so happens that New York is where the nun-administered orphanage where Norma lived as a child is located. Norma would like to learn of her roots.

Norma and Louise begin a feisty, mother-daughter, older/younger-sister, teacher-student relationship, where each dynamic swings both ways, due to Norma’s age and experience versus Louise’s charismatic, self-assured, wise-beyond-her-years personality.

And so Norma leads a double life in New York for a time. On the one hand, she’s walking around with a figurative shepherd’s crook, yanking young Louise from battling eyelashes at smitten waiters for free ice creams and helping her purge overconsumption of speakeasy gin; on the other, she’s tracking down her own mother (played by Blythe Danner).

As for the latter mission, the orphanage’s mother superior turns Norma down flat regarding giving out information on relatives. However, Norma strikes up a friendship with the orphanage’s widowed and exceedingly helpful janitor, Joseph (Geza Rohrig, currently also starring in “To Dust”).

And as for finding her mother, when Norma does, she’s tragically dashed of the long-held sacred memories and hopes of her childhood self. She’s forced to confront the reality that here is a person who never wanted her, only came for a quick look out of mild



ALL PHOTOS BY FIBONACCI FILMS

Louise Brooks (Haley Lu Richardson) working her charm on a soda jerk.

curiosity, and ultimately doesn’t want to know her or her grandsons. You’ll wonder why Elizabeth McGovern doesn’t work more.

Tradition or Progress?
“The Chaperone” takes a mild look at various issues America was dealing with at the time: orphans and why young people ought not to be left unsupervised, the possible lethal repercussions of exposed homosexuality, prohibition, race relations, the Ku Klux Klan, white America’s fear of black people, and women’s suffrage.

Norma’s character arc resides, basically, in the metaphor of her corset. Her dedication to daily corset-wearing demonstrates to us the origin of the term “tight-laced.” She loosens up eventually, literally and figuratively.

But while Louise’s effect on her matronly chaperone could be seen as Norma’s embracing the mantra of the Al-Anon 12-step group: “Put yourself first,” Norma’s effect on Louise is more like that of a guardian angel. Norma circles back years later, after Hollywood has evicted Louise and she’s down and out and back in Wichita. Norma actually facilitates Louise’s second Hero’s Journey out of Wichita. That kind of long-term karmic connection is a rare thing.

But as mentioned, the film is snail’s paced, a bit fusty, and the outdated social mores and moral values will rankle. And yet ... it does give one pause. Which is what good art ought to do. Have our largely unraveled social mores and cast-aside moral restrictions of the church led to a better America? Was life better when chaperoning was a thing? Is it better now? Are fifty bazillion abortions better than fifty thousand orphans?

If you go and relax your twanging synapses (after viewing any “Avenger” movie) and breathe and slow your pace down, “The Chaperone” is actually rather enjoyable. And it will give you much to ponder afterward.

‘The Chaperone’

Director
Michael Engler

Starring
Haley Lu Richardson, Miranda Otto, Elizabeth McGovern, Blythe Danner,

★★★★☆

Campbell Scott, Geza Rohrig

Running Time
1 hour, 43 minutes

Unrated

Release Date
March 29

FILM REVIEW

Rethink the Term ‘Stockholm Syndrome’

JOE BENDEL

Ostensibly, it is a term used to condone questionable decisions, but the term “Stockholm Syndrome” definitely carries highly negative connotations. In general parlance, it implies that the victims were either too weak or too stupid to resist the brainwashing or seduction by their captors. However, the circumstances of the historical incident that coined the term were considerably different. At least, that is how the somewhat fictionalized chronicle of the Normalmstorg Kreditbanken hostage crisis unfolds in Robert Budreau’s “Stockholm,” which screened during the 2018 Tribeca Film Festival.

The hostage-taker presents himself as an American singing cowboy, but his real identity will be the source of some controversy during the standoff. Regardless, his love for Bob Dylan is genuine enough. (The film opens with “New Morning,” a good one that isn’t overplayed.)

Oddly enough, Kaj Hansson (as he is first assumed to be) is not so shocked when the alarm is tripped. In fact, it is a necessary precondition for him to start presenting his demands, which includes the release of his bank-robbing best pal Gunnar Sorensson.

It turns out that Sorensson is rather surprised by the scheme, but he plays along—and maybe plays both sides against each other when the cops offer him a deal to act as a “mediator.” Bank officer Bianca Lind is more perceptive than Hansson (or whoever he is). She can tell he has more enthusiasm than brains. He is in over his head. But the increasingly infuriated cops are probably a greater threat to her safety.

Together with the two other hostages, who also start to see things her way, Lind tries to help plot an exit strategy for Hansson and Sorensson.

For many viewers, the big surprise here will be the portrayal of Lind (and to a lesser extent, her two fellow hostages). Frankly, they are not victims at all. Yes, they were menaced a bit during the initial hostage-taking, but they quickly get over it.

There is no question that Lind is the smartest person in the room—and she chooses to help her serenading captor, making her own voluntary decision.



DARK STAR PICTURES

Ethan Hawke and Noomi Rapace in “Stockholm,” based on the true incident from which the term “Stockholm Syndrome” originated.

As a result, this film is bound to be controversial, especially in Sweden, considering it portrays the sainted Olof Palme as a craven political beast.

The other happy revelation is just how good Noomi Rapace is as Lind. Let’s be honest: her post-“Millennium Trilogy” work has been iffy. (We’re talking about films like “Bright,” “Unlocked,” and “What Happened to Monday?” here.) Maybe going back to Sweden was healthy for her, because she is totally riveting as Lind, but in a way that is both cerebral and humane.

Rapace also develops some intriguingly ambiguous chemistry with

Ethan Hawke as the nice-guy hostage-taker. Arguably, Hawke is a tad old for the “impetuous kid” role (his historical analog was 32 at the time of the standoff), but he might be one of the few thespes working today who can credibly convey the character’s flamboyance and his naiveté.

Of course, Mark Strong is money in the bank as the intense, borderline sociopathic Sorensson. Terms like “heroes,” “villains,” and “antiheroes” definitely get a little murky in a film like this, with Christopher Heyerdahl (a distant relation of the explorer) making quite a memorably severe

‘Stockholm’

Director
Robert Budreau

Starring
Noomi Rapace, Mark Strong, Ethan Hawke

Running Time
1 hour, 32 minutes

Release Date
April 12

★★★★☆

antagonist as police chief Mattsson. “Stockholm Syndrome” is a term that gets haphazardly thrown around, but this film makes viewers question its usage, even in its first instance.

It is a tight, energetic period thriller, helmed with a fair amount of flair by Budreau (who also directed Hawke in the hip Chet Baker biopic, “Born to Be Blue”). Highly recommended, “Stockholm” will be released April 12.

Joe Bendel writes about independent film and lives in New York. To read his most recent articles, visit JBSpins.blogspot.com

FINE ARTS

Raphael's Masterpiece Is Restored

The 'School of Athens' cartoon is again on view in Milan

Continued from Page 7

A Who's Who in 'Philosophy'
In the center of the scene stand two men: Plato on the left stands next to his student Aristotle. The two men are pivotal to the scene. Each represents a different set of philosophical ideals, and each man holds one of his works in his left hand. Plato holds his "Timaeus," and Aristotle holds his "Nicomachean Ethics."

"School of Athens," by Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio). Card-board, charcoal, and white lead; 9 feet, 4 inches by 26 feet, 4 1/2 inches. The cartoon has been in the Ambrosiana Gallery since 1610.



Detail of Plato (L) and Aristotle (R) in the "School of Athens," by Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio).



Detail of Euclid (R) in the "School of Athens," by Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio).



Detail of Pythagoras.

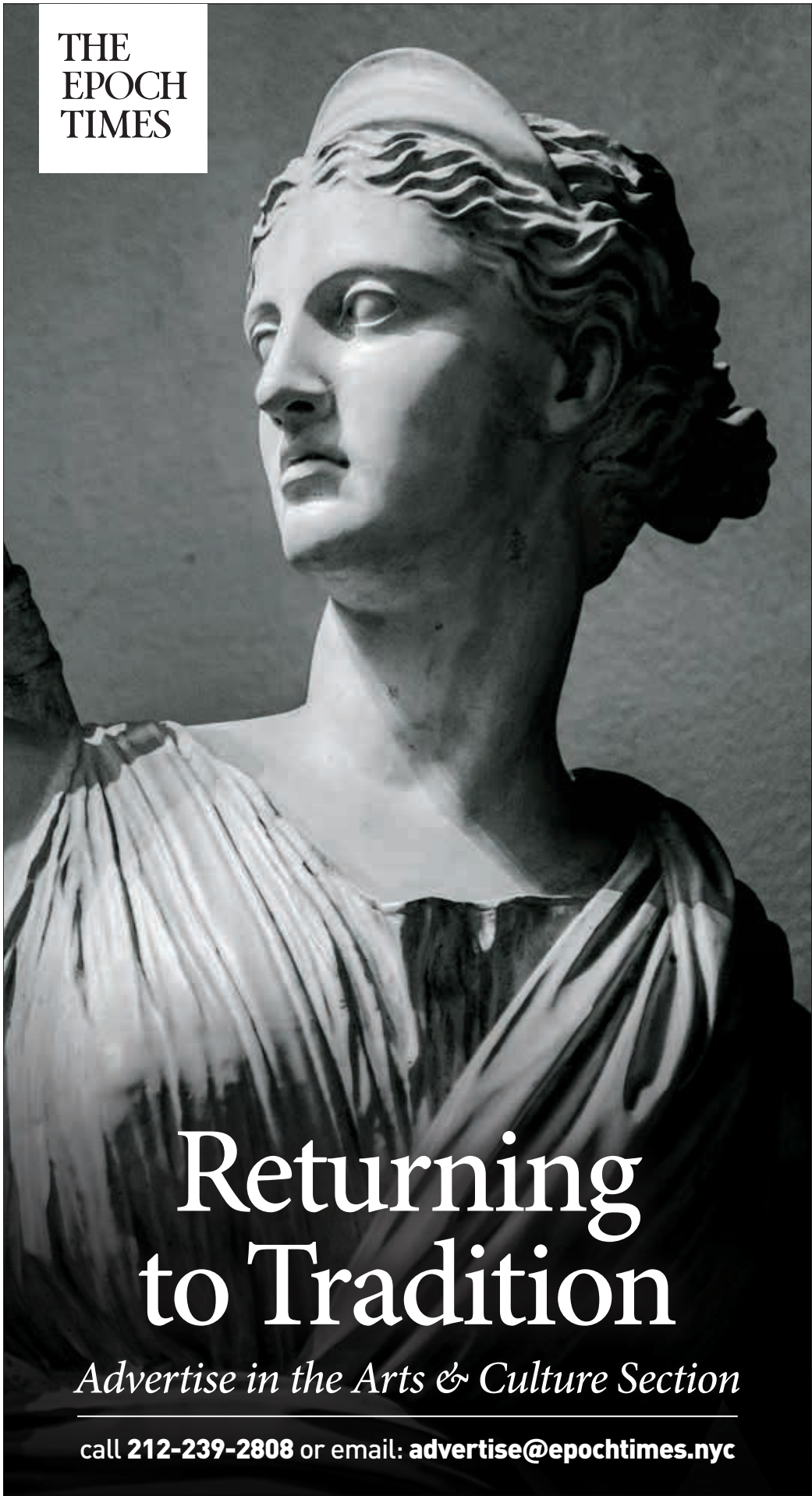
Most of the figures are communing in small groups, in what seem like fascinating debates and dialogues.

Figures on the left of the painting lean toward Plato's school, and those to the right of the painting represent Aristotle's thinking. Socrates can be seen in profile to the direct left of Plato. His distinctive features align with his busts from antiquity. In the cartoon, he can be seen reasoning with those students around him, just as he would have done when he taught Plato. Further down on the same side, Pythagoras is sitting hunched over a book, immersed in writing, as a small crowd gathers round to listen. All seem eager not to miss a word. Not all of the philosophers could have been copied from antique art, nor would they have been as recognizable as Socrates. Experts agree that some of the philosophers' faces that Raphael drew in "Philosophy" are represented by his friends and contemporaries in the arts. Look to the right side of the painting, directly in line with Pythagoras, and there is the mathematician Euclid, the founder of geometry. He's hunched over a slate, measuring or demonstrating a diagram with a compass. His face is actually that of Donato Bramante, a friend of Raphael's and the architect who created the High Renaissance style of architecture. Bramante would have used mathematics to draft his designs. Most of the figures are communing in small groups, in what seem like fascinating debates and dialogues. There are a few notable exceptions. One is Hypatia, the female figure in the group around Pythagoras. She stares out into the viewer's space.

The Glorious Raphael
Pope Julius II was so impressed with the completed "Philosophy" fresco in the Room of the Segnatura that he ordered all work by other masters to be destroyed so Raphael could create anew, said the artist and art historian Giorgio Vasari in his second edition of "The Lives of the Most Excellent Architects, Painters, and Sculptors." Vasari added that the pope wanted Raphael alone to "have the glory of replacing what had been done." Vasari echoed the pope's praise, but from an artist's point of view. He greatly admired the thought process behind such a complex composition, where small details were meticulously executed, and the many figures were "delicately and finely finished." Vasari recognized "Raphael's determination to hold the field, without a rival, against all who wielded the brush."

Detail of the "School of Athens."

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TRUTH AND TRADITION

THEATER REVIEW

TRYING TO DO WHAT THE
CONSCIENCE
DEMANDS

‘Vilna’

Theatre at St. Clement’s
423 W. 46th St.
New York

Tickets
212-239-6200 or
Telecharge.com

Running Time
2 hours, 15 minutes
(one intermission)

Closes
April 14

Please note,
the theater is
not wheelchair
accessible.

ALL PHOTOS BY CAROL ROSEGG



(Top)
Motke Zeidel (Sean Hudock, L) and Yudi Farber (Seamus Mulcahy), in “Vilna.”

(Bottom)
(L-R) Mark Jacoby, Sean Hudock, Sophia Blum, Seamus Mulcahy, and Carey Van Driest in a scene from “Vilna.”

JUDD HOLLANDER

NEW YORK—Every choice a person makes is a test of his or her mettle. Yet when a choice becomes a matter of life and death for many, the question becomes how far should one go for the sake of the greater good. Ira Fuchs’s powerful drama “Vilna,” now having its world premiere at the Theatre at St. Clement’s, spans from 1928 through World War II and is a work that should be mandatory viewing for everyone over 18. According to the program notes, 49 percent of millennials cannot name a single camp or ghetto from the Holocaust.

The Jewish people of Vilna—at the time of the story a Polish city—have long had to cope with racial hatred. The area has changed hands many times in an endless geopolitical tug of war. As one character notes, “The Russians, the Poles, and the Lithuanians hated each other. And they all hated the Jews.” Among those living in the city are Motke Zeidel (Sean Hudock) and Yudi Farber (Seamus Mulcahy). Born to Jewish parents, Motke is a bit of a dreamer, with no desire to follow in the footsteps of either his physician mother or glove-maker father. Yudi is an orphan of German-Jewish parentage, with a great head for figures.



He wants to become an engineer. Meeting as boys, the two quickly become best friends, so much so that Motke’s parents eventually take Yudi into their family. This situation works out in their favor years later. To get around a new law designed to force Jews out of business, Motke’s father, Josef (Mark Jacoby), transfers control of his glove company to Yudi who, because his father was German, is looked upon as such by the authorities. The rise of anti-Semitism is responsible for setting Motke on his own path. He becomes a lawyer so he can fight for his people in the courts. However, with the increasing influence of nationalistic groups and the ever-growing threat of war, the only way Motke and the others can remain free is to perform needed services for whichever invader comes calling. His and Yudi’s respected status in the Jewish community make them natural choices to act as liaisons between different parties. It’s a fine line that many are forced to walk. With the creation of a ghetto to house Vilna’s Jewish population, there is even less wiggle room. Motke and Yudi are among those tasked with going through lists of people and deciding who will be sent to the nearby labor camps. In return, they are able to keep the ghetto functioning as its own inner city and make sure its health and sanitary conditions are maintained. They thus can save the greatest possible number of lives.

Yet the question remains: Is it simply enough to survive a horrific experience, or is it more important how it is done? This question comes up time and time again as Motke, Yudi, and others try to follow their own consciences, while balancing the need for survival with that of resistance. For example, food is denied to those in the ghetto who don’t follow necessary sanitary regulations, such as bathing and shaving. As the play shows, it’s easy to scream “No!!” when you’re not the one having to make decisions for an entire community, or when your actions—no matter which way you choose—will lead to people’s deaths.

For all the play’s seriousness—most of the characters depicted actually existed—“Vilna” is a work filled with ironies. In an early scene, Motke’s mother (Carey Van Driest) is berated by a Polish customs officer (Patrick Toon), only to have him later ask her in all seriousness for medical advice. Hudock and Mulcahy are excellent as Motke and Yudi, each of whom makes his own stand in an unspeakable situation. Jacoby adds a nice touch of old-world gravitas as Josef, and Driest is good as Motke’s no-nonsense mother. Tom Morin presents quite a poignant turn as Pietr. First seen as a young, uneducated boy, he goes from helpless victim to conqueror and back again. Paul Cooper gives the most chilling performance by far as a German officer determined to carry out his orders regarding the Jews.

Joseph Discher’s direction is strong. He and Fuchs slowly and methodically introduce the audience to the various characters and ratchet up the tension as the story progresses. While the early part of the play is perhaps a bit too by the numbers, that feeling vanishes as the tale unfolds. Sets by Brittany Vasta, which often depend more on the imagination than anything else, are fine. Lighting by Harry Feiner—alternatively harsh and subdued—also helps to strike the right tone. As time passes and these powerful events recede into history, they all too often run the risk of being forgotten. “Vilna” reminds audiences in no uncertain terms why these stories should continue to be told. Please note, the theater is not wheelchair accessible.

Judd Hollander is a reviewer for Stagebuzz.com and a member of the Drama Desk and the Outer Critics Circle.



TRUTH and TRADITION

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