

ESSENCE OF CHINA

Celebrating the Year of the Pig!

The Chinese believe the last sign of the Chinese zodiac will bring prosperity.

See Page 2

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ALBUM REVIEW

Showcasing Handel's Sacred Pieces

A new album vividly re-creates the performance style of Handel's time, with single voices for each part.

See Page 12

ARTS | CULTURE | MUSIC

WEEK 6, 2019 1

WEEKLY

# ARTS & TRADITION

THE EPOCH TIMES

PRIVATE COLLECTION



"Mary and Margaret Gainsborough, the Artist's Daughters," circa 1774, by Thomas Gainsborough. Oil on canvas. Private Collection.

FINE ARTS

## Portraits Painted for Love, Not Money

'Gainsborough's Family Album,' an exhibition at Princeton University Art Museum

LORRAINE FERRIER

The family portfolio of the great British artist Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788) is the most comprehensive collection of personal family portraits by any artist—of his time or of any time prior. Collectively, these portraits are a unique peek into the life of ordinary 18th-century people, in this case a middle-class family, at a time when most portraits could only be afforded by the wealthy.

Fifty of Gainsborough's self-portraits and family portraits, from public and private collections, will come together for the first time in "Gainsborough's Family Album," an exhibition organized by the National Portrait Gallery in London,

Continued on Page 4



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## ARTS & CULTURE

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### ESSENCE OF CHINA

## Celebrating Chinese New Year 2019: The Year of the



LILY CHOO

The Chinese New Year in 2019 is celebrated on Feb. 5, marking the beginning of the Year of the Pig in the Chinese zodiac.

The Chinese New Year is the most important festival of the Chinese people. Like the solar New Year, it represents a time for reflection, for resolutions, and new hope in the year to come.

According to the traditional Chinese lunar calendar, the first day of the Chinese lunar year may fall anywhere between late January and the middle of February.

The Chinese lunar calendar incorporates both the lunar cycle and the position of the sun. According to legend, the calendar dates back to 2600 B.C., when the mythical Yellow Emperor started the first cycle of the Chinese zodiac and named an animal to represent each year in the 12-year cycle.

The 12 animal signs are the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig.

#### The Sign of the Pig

The pig is the 12th sign in the Chinese zodiac. If you were born in 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, or 2019, your Chinese zodiac sign is likely the pig. It is important, though, to consider the day of your birth in January or February in regard to the first day of the Chinese New Year.

The pig is perhaps the most complex symbol, since it has both positive and negative elements. The positive elements are wealth (symbolized by the piggy bank), good fortune, friendship, patience, popularity, and peace.

Pigs are associated with stupidity in both Eastern and Western cultures. In English, the word "pigheaded" means stupid or stubborn. In Chinese, the word "pig head" is used when scolding someone who is stupid. The pig represents negative personality traits such as being stubborn, careless, absent-minded, disorganized, and mischievous.

#### New Year Wishes:

**A Year to Expect Wealth**  
The Chinese believe the Year of the Pig will bring wealth and prosperity. Beyond having a stable income, they hope to make extra money, and some believe it's an auspicious time to make new financial investments.

The Year of the Pig is expected to bring joy, friendship, and love for all the zodiac signs as the pig attracts success in all the spheres of life.

Sayings associated with the year include: The Golden Pig brings you good fortune! Lucky and joyful Year of the Pig! Peace and good health in the Year of the Pig! The Year of the Pig arrives and good fortune comes!



It's a Chinese New Year tradition to give children a red envelope with money inside.

ing lines of poetry that express people's joy and hope for the New Year.

#### Celebration With Couplet Verses

Couplet Verses or Chinese New Year Couplets, Chun Lian in Chinese, are an important part of the New Year celebration. Also known as an antithetical couplet, it is often in the traditional style and reflects hope, peace, and prosperity for the year to come. A Chinese couplet is usually a pair of successive lines of verse, especially a pair that rhyme, and the number of characters in each line is the same. The structure is very strict and well-defined.

The first line is the "head," and the second line is the "tail." In a couplet, a balance must be found between head and tail, between each character in one and the usually contrasting character in the same position in the other, and in tone, rhyme, and meaning.

A horizontal streamer (heng pi), which normally has four characters, is added above the entrance and between the two vertical streamers to indicate the theme of the couplets.

The founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368-1644), Zhu Yuanzhang, issued an order before one New Year's Eve requiring every household to write couplets on red paper and post them on entry door frames to welcome the New Year.

Some believe the Year of the Pig is an auspicious time to make new financial investments.



During the morning of the New Year, the emperor dressed himself in plain clothes and went door-to-door reading the couplets. Whenever he saw well-written scrolls, he was very happy and praised the writers' talents.

With the emperor's advocacy, the tradition of writing New Year couplets became a custom that has continued to the present day.

The following are some commonly used couplets for the New Year.

The Pig is valued most among the six farm animals [pig, cow, sheep, chicken, horse, and dog] (*liu chu zhu wei shou*)  
Spring takes the lead among the four seasons (*yi nian chun zhan xian*)

The Dog keeps guard for a peaceful 2018 (*gou shou tai ping sui*)

The Pig ushers in a prosperous 2019 (*zhu qian fu ju nian*)

Although the Pig is the last (Chinese) zodiac sign (*sui shu sheng xiao hou*)

The Pig is ranked first among the six farm animals (*que ju liu chu xian*)

## What Our Readers Say:

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It's bringing morality back to newspapers.

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It's the only paper that I know of right now that actually gives you the honest, old fashioned journalism.

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THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION



A Chinese New Year greeting, traditionally made with red paper.

#### New Year Traditions

Chinese New Year is the most important of the traditional Chinese festivals. The celebration usually lasts 15 days, from New Year's Day to the Lantern Festival, which is the 15th day of the first month of the Chinese lunar calendar.

Very importantly, many families gather for a big family reunion dinner on New Year's Eve, and the Chinese people also pay visits to their relatives as part of the New Year celebration.

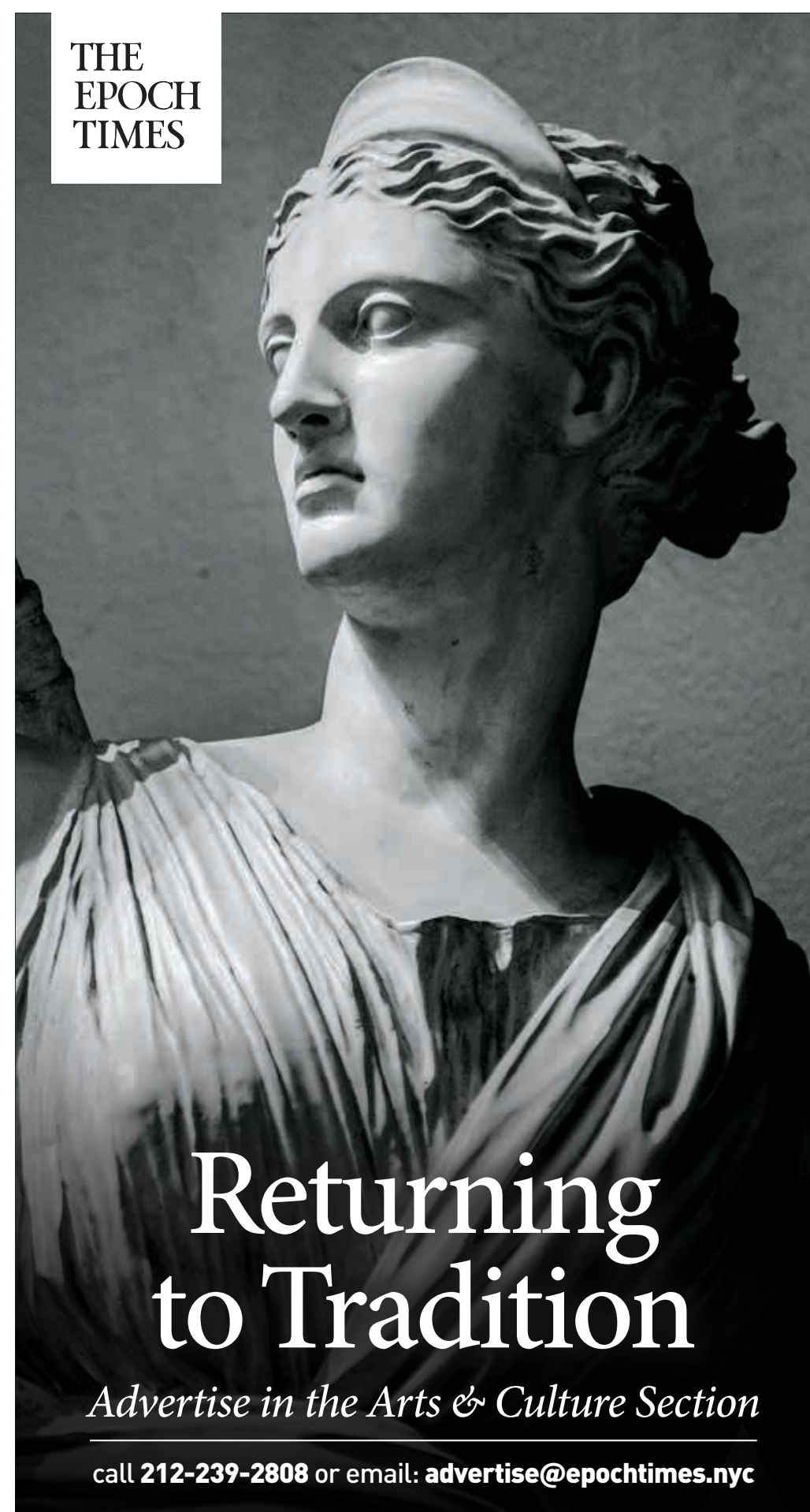
There are many traditions and customs associated with the Chinese New Year. Families thoroughly clean their houses in order to sweep away any ill fortune and to make way for good luck. Fireworks, firecrackers, red packages, the lion dance, the dragon dance, and lanterns with riddles are common customs and traditions observed during the Chinese New Year period.

One tradition is that windows and doors are decorated, sometimes with streamer or banners, with delicate red paper cutouts and poetic couplets—pairs of correspond-



Families gather for a big family reunion dinner.

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TRUTH AND TRADITION

## FINE ARTS

# Portraits Painted for Love, Not Money

‘Gainsborough’s Family Album,’ an exhibition at Princeton University Art Museum

Continued from Page 1

In association with the Princeton University Art Museum. The exhibition opens on Feb. 23 at the Princeton University Art Museum and runs until June 9.

The exhibition is curated by professor David Solkin, professor emeritus of the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, with the support of Lucy Peltz, the senior curator of the 18th-century collections and head of collections displays (Tudor to Regency) at the National Portrait Gallery in London.

## The Art of Gainsborough

Gainsborough was known for painting portraits, landscapes, and “fancy pictures.” Fancy pictures were scenes of everyday life interspersed with “elements of imagination, inventions, or storytelling.” It was Gainsborough’s contemporary and rival, the renowned British portraitist Sir Joshua Reynolds, who coined the term “fancy pictures” to describe Gainsborough’s paintings from 1770 until his death in 1788.

Whereas Reynolds referenced antiquity and the Italian Renaissance in his portraits, Gainsborough tended to depict contemporary life and landscapes in his. Perhaps this difference is in recognition of their upbringings: Reynolds came from an educated family, and Gainsborough was the son of a wool manufacturer. Yet they were both influenced by the work of Rubens and Van Dyck.

Gainsborough was born in Sudbury in the district of Suffolk, a rural part of England. In 1740 at the age of 13, he was sent to London to train with the French engraver and illustrator Hubert-François Gravelot, a pupil of the prolific French painter François Boucher (1703–1770).

Later, in 1752, after revisiting the countryside, Gainsborough moved to Ipswich, where he began to paint portraits for town merchants and squires. In 1759, he moved to Bath, where he took commissions from members of high society and painted full-length portraits. In 1768, he was a founding member of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, and he eventually moved to London in 1774.

Although Gainsborough made his living through portraiture, he greatly preferred to paint landscapes. He wrote to his friend William Jackson that he was tired of painting portraits: “If I wish I could take my Viol da Gamba and walk off to some sweet Village, where I can paint Landscips and enjoy the ... End of life in quietness and ease.” The Viola da Gamba is a late 15th-century musical instrument similar to a cello.

Yet when it came to painting his family’s portraits, it seemed he did not tire. Gainsborough painted his close family members: his wife and two daughters; his extended family: his nephew and brother-in-law; his servants; and even his pets.

The portraits chart not only Gainsborough’s family through time, but also his maturation as an artist. These intimate portraits were perhaps a true expression of Gainsborough the artist, whereby he could experiment with style, composition, and technique without the confines of a commission or patron.

## Bringing Gainsborough’s Family Portraits to Light

As a curator at the National Portrait Gallery in London, Peltz, according to Country Life magazine, spent more than five years tracing the whereabouts of some of Gainsborough’s family portraits, some of which had been in private hands for many years. After exhausting all the usual avenues, in a spark of inspiration, she turned to traditional media, and in July 2015, she posted a letter appealing for information on the missing Gainsborough family portraits in the quintessential English publication Country Life magazine. The first appeal was a success, which led to another appeal a few months later.

One of the paintings found through the appeal was an unfinished portrait of Gainsborough’s daughter Margaret playing a cittern, which has not been publicly shown for 130 years.

Before “Gainsborough’s Family Album” first opened in London on Nov. 22, at the National Portrait Gallery, as with every piece of artwork that is exhibited at the gallery, the in-house conservator’s studio had to assess each painting as to its suitability for public display.

One of the works inspected was the oval portrait of Gainsborough’s nephew and apprentice, Gainsborough Dupont (1754–1797), which has not been on public display for over 100 years. The portrait was only identified as being Dupont in 2003, by Susan Sloman, author of “Gainsborough in Bath” and a contributor to the exhibition book.

On close inspection, the conservators at the National Portrait Gallery in London ascertained that the portrait of Dupont had probably been restored in the 19th century. Although the painting was in a stable state to exhibit, the varnish obscured some of the nuances of Gainsborough’s brushwork. The careful removal of the varnish revealed how thin layers of paint were applied in Gainsborough’s highly praised “sprezzatura,” the specific art of making difficult brushstrokes appear effortless. Gainsborough’s painting of Dupont clearly shows spirited, broad, and bold brushstrokes, expertly applied.

The conservation effort also revealed elements previously hidden by the aging varnish, such as touches of blue in Dupont’s hair and around his eyes, which reflect the opulent blue jacket, and also the pink-beige background used as a highlight throughout the painting.

The conservators have brought back a luminosity

**These intimate portraits were perhaps a true expression of Gainsborough the artist.**

“The Artist with His Wife Margaret and Eldest Daughter Mary,” 1748 (?), by Thomas Gainsborough. Oil on canvas. Acquired under the acceptance-in-lieu scheme at the wish of Sybil Marchioness of Cholmondeley, in memory of her brother, Sir Philip Sassoon, 1994, The National Gallery, London.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

that was missing in the painting, which is perhaps what Gainsborough’s friend Philip Thicknesse saw at the time it was painted. He had said it was “more like the work of God than man” and “the finest head he had ever painted,” for Gainsborough, inspired by the paintings of Van Dyck, had transformed Dupont from a Suffolk carpenter’s son to an aristocrat.

## An Enduring Family Delight

The exhibition is full of delightful surprises. In addition to the “new” Dupont. Many of the paintings have long been kept behind closed doors, like a family album. Among the many highlights is a gorgeous portrait of Gainsborough’s wife, Margaret (circa 1777–78), in later life. Another is a rarely seen, double full-length portrait of Gainsborough’s daughters (circa 1774), Mary and Margaret, where in the young ladies are dressed in sumptuous finery of the kind Gainsborough’s customers might have been accustomed to.

Of all the paintings, those of Gainsborough’s daughters may feel the most familiar. In this exhibi-

tion, there are 10 portraits of the girls, who, much as in a collection of photographs, seem to grow from innocence into adulthood.

Maybe the most enduring image of the girls is the famous portrait “The Artist’s Daughters Chasing a Butterfly” (circa 1756). Although it won’t be in Princeton’s exhibition, the painting was exhibited on the first stop of “Gainsborough’s Family Album” at the National Portrait Gallery in London. The young girls can be seen holding hands side by side, as one of them playfully reaches out to catch a butterfly.

In the press release, exhibition curator Solkin hopes “that ‘Gainsborough’s Family Album’ will prompt new ways of thinking about Gainsborough, and about the family albums that so many of us create.”

“Gainsborough’s Family Album” is at Princeton University Art Museum from Feb. 23 through June 9, 2019.

For more information on the exhibition, visit [ArtMuseum.Princeton.edu](http://ArtMuseum.Princeton.edu)



Self-portrait, mid-1770s and 1790, by Thomas Gainsborough, completed by Gainsborough Dupont. Oil on canvas. The Samuel Courtauld Trust.

THE COURTAULD GALLERY, LONDON

“Margaret Gainsborough, the Artist’s Wife,” circa 1777, by Thomas Gainsborough. Oil on canvas. The Samuel Courtauld Trust.

THE COURTAULD GALLERY, LONDON



“Tristram and Fox (?),” circa 1775–1785, by Thomas Gainsborough. Oil on canvas. Presented by the family of Richard J. Lane 1896, Tate, London.

TATE, LONDON 2019



(TOP - BOTTOM) Before, during, and after conservation treatment: “Gainsborough Dupont, the Artist’s Nephew,” 1773, by Thomas Gainsborough. Oil on canvas, 20 1/3 inches by 15 1/4 inches. Waddesdon (Rothschild Family).

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

(ABOVE) “Mary and Margaret Gainsborough, the Artist’s Daughters,” circa 1760–1761, by Thomas Gainsborough. Oil on canvas. Bequeathed by John Forster, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

(RIGHT) “Mary and Margaret Gainsborough, the Artist’s Daughters Chasing a Butterfly,” circa 1756, by Thomas Gainsborough, is not part of the Princeton exhibition. Henry Vaughan Bequest, 1900, The National Gallery, London.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON



## MYTHS: MAPPING OUR WAY HOME

# Apollo and the Making of Poetry



◀ The myth of Apollo and Daphne can be interpreted as showing how a poem comes to life. "Apollo and Daphne" by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680). Galleria Borghese. PUBLIC DOMAIN

## JAMES SALE

It was Lord Chesterfield, not a particularly profound thinker, who in 18th-century England correctly observed that "I am very sure that any man of common understanding may, by culture, care, attention, and labor, make himself whatever he pleases, except a great poet." Given that Chesterfield was an aristocrat, and with all that sense of self-importance and entitlement that such aristocrats in those days (and since) bestowed upon themselves, and also well-known as a man of letters, this was quite a severe con-

striction or limitation that he placed upon all peoples everywhere: You simply couldn't make yourself a poet no matter what you did! And as un-egalitarian as it sounds and is, it points to the real difficulty there is in becoming a poet (and by, I think, legitimate extension, an artist of any sort: composer, artist, or dramatist, to name three other major and cognate disciplines).

Schools, colleges, and universities will certainly not be quoting this much these days, as for the last 70 years more or less, with the rise of modernism and post-modernism, anybody can be a poet; anybody, everybody is a poet.

**The key myth that enables us to understand why Apollo is the god of poetry is that of Apollo and Daphne.**

Just express yourself, and let's not be judgmental about these scribbles, however feeble they may be. Further, if we abandon form—free verse or vers libre—then nobody will be able anyway to judge the merits of what you do.

Voilà! Problem solved; no standards of judgment at all. We can all write poetry. Everybody gets a prize. At least so it seems if some of us were not able to penetrate the lies and delusions that Western society foists on us in the name of great education.

Continued on Page 8

## ESSENCE OF CHINA



## Shen Yun's 13th Season Underway

Moving audiences with authentic Chinese culture

## EPOCH TIMES STAFF

A westrack is a look you will see on many people's faces after they have watched a Shen Yun performance. Though they have seen the advertising, or have had Shen Yun recommended to them by friends, what they experience often comes as a surprise.

New York-based Shen Yun's 13th season is fully underway, with all six of its 80-member touring groups presenting traditional Chinese culture to audiences in the United States and around the world. New cities have also been added to the itinerary, as well as more performances added to the world's major cities like New York, Paris, and Berlin.

This year's production debuted in California on Dec. 12, an early start to the season for the arts company that rehearses and travels with a new production each year. So far, the touring companies have performed throughout a number of states, including California, Massachusetts, Virginia, Texas, and New York.

The Epoch Times has attended all performances worldwide and talked to many audience members about the

remarkable undertaking of reviving an ancient culture.

It was journalist Rita Cosby's fourth time watching Shen Yun perform when she saw the company at Lincoln Center in New York.



Journalist Rita Cosby saw Shen Yun Performing Arts for the fourth time at Lincoln Center, on Jan 10.

"The performance I have seen now is breathtaking," Ms. Cosby said. "It's so powerful; it's so moving because of the storyline behind it. It's really a story of courage. It's a story of appreciating his-

tory, appreciating the incredible people

of China, and I hope the whole world sees this."

"I'm walking away deeply inspired and profoundly moved," she said. "It's an incredible, incredible performance."

Shen Yun has also begun its 2019 tours of the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and France.

Opening night in France was in Paris on Jan. 16, and Prince Jean d'Orléans, Duke of Vendôme, attended. The prince said that watching Shen Yun made him feel he was "escaping into another world full of color, poetry, and humor."

"I think it's very good. We need this today," he said. "We're too materialistic, so we need to escape a little. We need poetry, and then we need this relationship ... with the sky, with the divine."

"When you don't know what your past is, it's hard to know where you're going," he said. "And I think that in a world that doesn't have a reference, tradition and culture are very important. And then when you have 5,000 years of culture, it's even stronger."

Shen Yun Performing Arts was formed in America by a group of Chinese artists who came together to revive traditional Chinese culture. Through classical Chi-



Prince Jean d'Orléans, head of the House of Orléans, attended the first performance of the Shen Yun Performing Arts company in Paris on Jan. 16 at the Palais des Congrès.

nese dance, Shen Yun Performing Arts seeks to impart not only China's stories but also its spirit and essential nature.

"Every dance embodies and celebrates the virtues that were at the heart of Chinese civilization for thousands of years: loyalty, courage, compassion, piety, and veneration for the divine," according to the Shen Yun Performing Arts website.

Continued on Page 10

## Peter Rabbit: Why It Is Still One of the Greats of Children's Literature

## PAUL WELLS

Since the days of Aesop, animals have been used as vehicles by which humankind has addressed its moral, ethical, and cultural identity. For some, this serves to misrepresent animals, privileging anthropomorphism at the expense of the more sensitive address of animal sentience and welfare. For others, this approach allows humans to circumvent their own social taboos to reveal not merely fresh insights into what it is to be human, but also humanity's intrinsic relationship to animals, with animals, and as part of nature.

Beatrix Potter enjoyed the work of poet Edward Lear, who specialized in nonsense verse and who wrote about a "Remarkable Rabbit." Potter thus decided to create "The Tale of Peter Rabbit," the story of a mischievous rabbit, who disobeys his mother to play in Mr. and Mrs. McGregor's garden, despite all its apparent dangers. From the outset, it was Potter's intention to use the story to show both human characteristics and animal behavior.

Peter is at once a playful vehicle by which to assess human foibles and to present an

animal within a pastoral environment. Reception of the story over time has been mixed. Is Peter a social transgressor within a human conception of the world, or merely the epitome of "the wild" outside the codes and conventions of rural society? Is the garden his most "natural" environment and home comforts a mere distortion of the countryside? And is Mr. McGregor, the gardener intent on keeping rabbits off his patch, Peter's most obvious adversary in the great chain of being?

These are but some of the issues in "The Tale of Peter Rabbit," which make it one of the most enduring and popular of children's narratives.

## Detached Storyteller

Initially written as a series of illustrated letters to her friend, Noel Moore, the son of her former governess, in 1893, the texts were reclaimed by Potter for private publication, and later taken up by established publisher Frederick Warne & Co. Its words and images were finalized by the 1903 edition.

Potter insisted the size of the book be suitable for children to hold, and that the animal illustrations were anatomically correct. Her watercolors provide the text with its distinctive aesthetic. Potter also drew the images from the animal's point of view, a vantage point nominally shared by a child's gaze, which stimulates the empathy of the young reader. Potter herself is a detached storyteller, narrating the indifferent (omni)presence of the human world.

This clear and precise vision for Peter informed Potter's decision to resist Walt Disney's approach to adapt the story into an animated feature in 1936. A 1935 Merrie Melodies cartoon, "Country Boy," freely adapted "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" a year earlier.

Disney, though, an admirer of the hare drawings of Heinrich Kley, saw Peter as an appealing rabbit character that would advance his own earlier creation, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. Debuting in 1927, Oswald was featured in 27 shorts, rivaling Felix the Cat, but in 1928, Charles Mintz took the rights from Disney for the character, forcing Disney to create another. Soon afterward, Mickey Mouse became the studio's signature character. Disney realized, though, that he needed a more iconic rabbit, and Potter's Peter was his favored character.

### Beatrix Potter insisted the size of the book be suitable for children to hold.

Keen to maintain the tone, aesthetic, and copyright of her book, Potter ensured Peter's identity would always be bound up, though, with the serious tone and color palette of her own illustrations.

Potter's watercolors also later influenced the art direction of Bambi in 1942, and her rabbit sketches (1890) the design of Thumper.

Crucially, Potter's imagery represented her artistic and intellectual skills as a naturalist. This helps to present Potter not as a quasi-Victorian moralist but as a modernist, insisting on a representation of what animals and children might naturally do. Disney would surely have made Peter both comic and morally accountable. Potter ensures he is both feisty and fun. As a more incisive fabulist, Potter depicts what Rus-

sian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein suggests (when, ironically, writing about Disney's characters) is the "factual regression into the animal."

## Later Adaptations

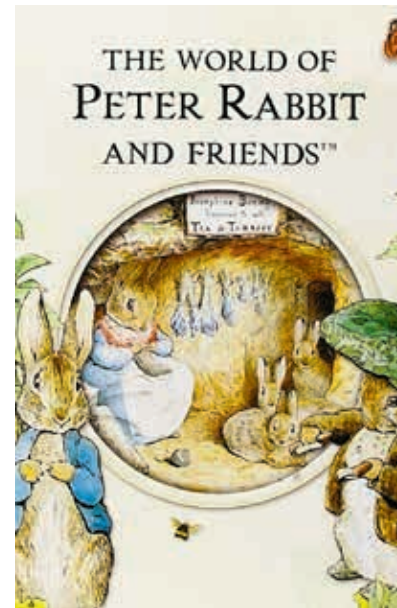
The integrity of Potter's design and outlook is maintained in Geoff Dunbar's later television series "The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends," which aired between 1992 and 1995. Each tale is bookended by live-action vignettes, featuring Niamh Cusack as Potter, filmed in Potter's real-life home environment of Hill Top Farm in the Lake District.

A CGI series, "Peter Rabbit," made for the Nickelodeon Channel in 2012, anticipates the more improvisatory tone and outlook of the recent Sony Entertainment adaptation of the Potter tale, "Peter Rabbit." The Sony film mistakes Potter's imperative to return to nature for a need to crassly aveugle and humiliate Mr. McGregor. Though playful, this detracts from the tension between human and animal explored in Potter's text. It replaces Peter's essential struggle for independence with routine adventures in the garden.

It is important to recall, then, that Potter wrote that Peter's father was baked in a pie by Mrs. McGregor. Real-world things really happen to animals. Throughout the story, Peter is aware of the danger he is in. He is aware of his own mortality. Peter's persona as a "naughty boy" is not played out as an identity by which he is judged or punished, though, but rather, as a sensibility that must simply enact itself.

Children are left to decide for themselves about the consequences of his disobedience and desire. As such, this ambiguity has helped maintain "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" as part of a canon of literature and film for children that has become part of the very process of their development and socialization.

Paul Wells is the director of the Animation Academy at Loughborough University in England. This article was first published on *The Conversation*.



An adaptation of Beatrix Potter's creations: Geoff Dunbar's 1992 television series "The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends" keeps the look and feel of the original.

## MYTHS: MAPPING OUR WAY HOME

# Apollo and the Making of Poetry



HELGA WIGANDT/SHUTTERSTOCK (ILLUSTRATION); PUBLIC DOMAIN (PHOTO)



At the moment Daphne sends a prayer, she is transformed. "Apollo and Daphne," circa 1560–1565, by Paolo Veronese. San Diego Museum of Art.

Continued from page 6

## The Lie That Desire Is Enough

And not just education. This all ties in with the personal development movement, one of whose great apostles, the American Napoleon Hill, summed it up this way: If you can believe it, you can achieve it. Whatever we want, so goes the dream, if we want it badly enough, we can achieve it. Just believe.

Yet, as with being a poet, we find in reality that there are limits to human abilities and achievements, but in hubris, the modern world now takes the defeatist view that any such limits are defeatist and that, via technology, utopia is just around the corner. Specifically, as to poetry, artificial intelligence will write better poems than humans!

I am not sure which is sadder: the idea that any sane person could think so, or that they are attempting—futilely—to do so.

Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, said Moses, so that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them. Would, indeed, that they all were poets, for then our society would be very different. But they are not, and we have to ask why not, or even: So how does one become a poet, then, if no amount of common understanding, culture, care, attention, and labor will make one so?

## How Is a Poem Made?

Wordsworth described the origins of poetry as being "emotion recollected in tranquility," which is true, but a pretty remote way of expressing it. It really doesn't give us enough to go on. It invites mellow bores to sit around viewing the landscape in reveries, while making jottings about how they feel, and then with a little shaping, find they are writing poems.

But the Greeks had much more dynamic ideas, and in their myths, sometimes in the small wrinkles, the tiny details, we find the clues as to the real origins of poetry. Of course, it is a given that the myths are telling us about our own psychology, so the small particulars are bound to be meaningful.

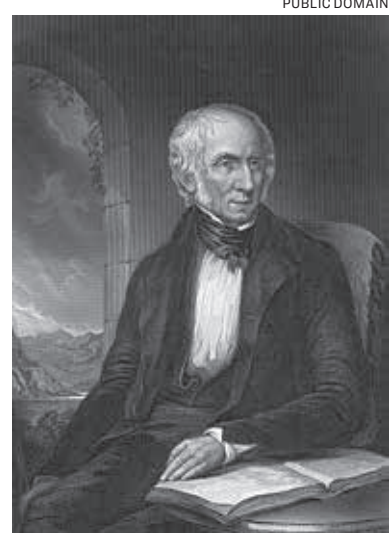
Here is a really interesting conundrum: The god Apollo is indisputably the Greek god of poetry. He is also the god of light, the sun, and the god of healing and prophecy. He is also the father of the nine Muses of poetry, and the father or grandfather, of Orpheus, the greatest poet who ever lived.

But the point is that Apollo per-

sonifies the values of order, harmony, reason, and moderation; yet poetry, however disciplined it may be in itself, has always been associated with emotion, extremes, and illogicality. As Shakespeare's Theseus observed (and what bigger authority could we have?): "The lunatic, the lover and the poet/Are of imagination all compact." How can the god of poetry be the god of reason and light?

## Apollo and Daphne: The Explanation of Poetry

The key myth that enables us to understand this process is that of Apollo and Daphne, perhaps most famously told in Ovid's "Metamorphoses," or "changes." To show the superiority of Eros's arrows of love over Apollo's arrows of destruction, the god Eros struck Apollo with unquenchable desire and love for the river nymph Daphne. She was the daughter of the river god, Peneus. So, the god of reason pursues—as a greyhound does a hare—the beautiful Daphne who is committed to remaining a virgin. Thus, the love which is also an all-consuming sexual desire, closes in on the object of its desire, for how can a mere nymph outrun the god of light?



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Poet William Wordsworth described the origins of poetry as being "emotion recollected in tranquility."

Then, brilliantly, at that point where Apollo reaches out to touch Daphne, she prays to her father to transform her and protect her from this consummation. Now, keep in mind, Peneus is a river god, a god of water, and water always symbolizes emotions, for it is always shapeless and flowing; and at that point, sud-

**How does one become a poet if no amount of common understanding, culture, care, attention, and labor will make one so?**

denly, she stops moving—a moment of tranquility—and becomes another living thing, rooted in the ground, a laurel tree.

For what has happened here? The poem has been written. It starts in the armory of the god of love, which strikes the god of light and form and purpose with desire for the pursuit of beauty.

In other words, love creates, and the creation becomes visible because light illuminates it. In fact, the light pursues the form of beauty in order to fully possess it, to consummate, as it were, the oneness of the lover with the beloved. Notice how this "striking" by love is, metaphorically, generative and creative, and it accelerates toward the object of its desire.

Think of the poet—the maker, or any creator—reaching out with love for their own creation. There is in this an ecstasy that creation is reaching for.

But here's the thing: At the point of the creative light reaching to touch the beauty, at that precise moment, that moment of stasis, of Wordsworth's tranquility, the ecstatic epiphany occurs because the beauty prays the holy prayer (hence why poets invoke the Muse) to its emotional sources, as emotion is always associated with water. And the river god answers with all the power of the river's emotional intensity. Light and form fuse with emotion into the living thing we call a tree, or a real poem.

That is the point, the point of creating. And in explaining the myth, we can see that although Wordsworth is right about "emotion recollected in tranquility," this is really far too passive a way of understanding how poetry is written.

No wonder not just anybody can be a poet. For to be a poet, one has to live with a profound uncertainty, or what Keats called "negative capability": The prayer being answered—that holy moment—cannot be summoned by human will.

As the ancients recognized, poetry is not a rational act of the will, or just a skill set. Skill sets are for versifiers.

Socrates put it this way: "I soon realized that poets do not compose their poems with real knowledge, but by inborn talent and inspiration, like seers and prophets who also say many things without any understanding of what they say..." The key word is "inspiration."

## Praise, Praise, Thrice Praise to Poets: Real Ones

Daphne escaped Apollo and became a laurel tree. Apollo, then, embraced the tree, arms around it, and swore undying praise to it. Laurel, the Latin "laudis," means praise, and leading poets are called Poet Laureates. Such is the instruction Apollo has given us.

The leaves of the laurel tree forever after symbolize the true poet, and true poets wear the laurel wreath—the crown on their heads through which divine inspiration strikes them. That is the process, but try teaching that in schools today!

This is why, in a weird sort of way, most professors of literature in our universities cannot possibly be poets. How could they be? They're academics, salaried, safe types. There's nothing safe about Apollo's pursuit of Daphne; it's not about a Ph.D., and (to be fair) even less about ignorance (as if "not knowing" about poetry could help one be a poet). Yeats is the major poet of the last 100 years who completely "got," and lived, this kind of mythology.

Finally, we know that probably over 95 percent of the "famous" poets today in the United States and the UK who are published by the major publishers and reviewed in the major papers are not poets at all. And we know this of course because, unlike, say, Robert Frost, nobody reads or buys them anymore, apart from small coteries of idolizing followers.

These "poets" are ideologues, most of them. They want to take a stand for or against "equality," feminism, anti-racism, gender diversity, political oppression, Marxism, the Catholic Church, pedophilia, or some such issue.

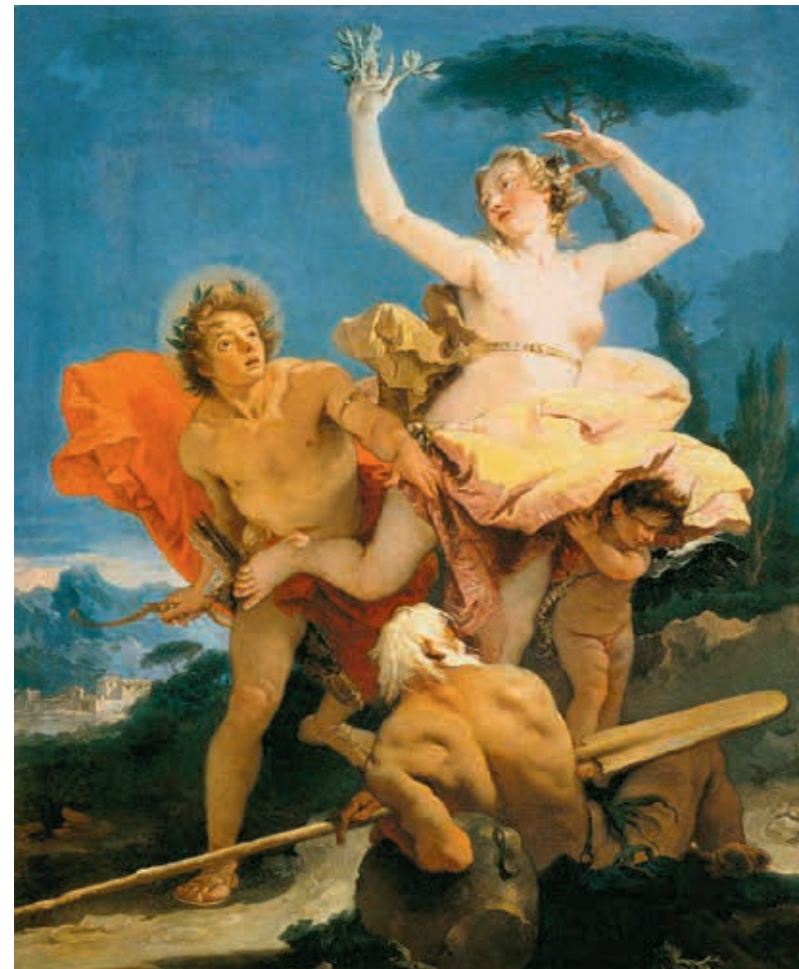
They are not pursuing the beauty of Daphne with generative love. Instead, their brains express some logical proposition about some ideology; the language is lineated (so it's poetry, yes?), largely formless, and it may be abstruse, abstract, extreme, pointed, funny even, but it is never beautiful and never comes from the soul where the true river of emotion flows.

In short, it is entirely a mental construct, like a shopping list, but one that ticks the virtue-signaling boxes and plays to the public gallery of simplistic ideas. No one in 50 years' time will be reading them. But we will still be reading Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and W.B. Yeats—the real poets, inflicted with the strange desire of Apollo for the unattainable beauty that is beyond the reach of men and women.

James Sale is an English businessman and the creator of *Motivational Maps*, which operates in 14 countries. He has authored over 40 books from major international publishers, including Macmillan, Pearson, and Routledge, on management, education, and poetry. As a poet, he won first prize in *The Society of Classical Poets' 2017* competition.

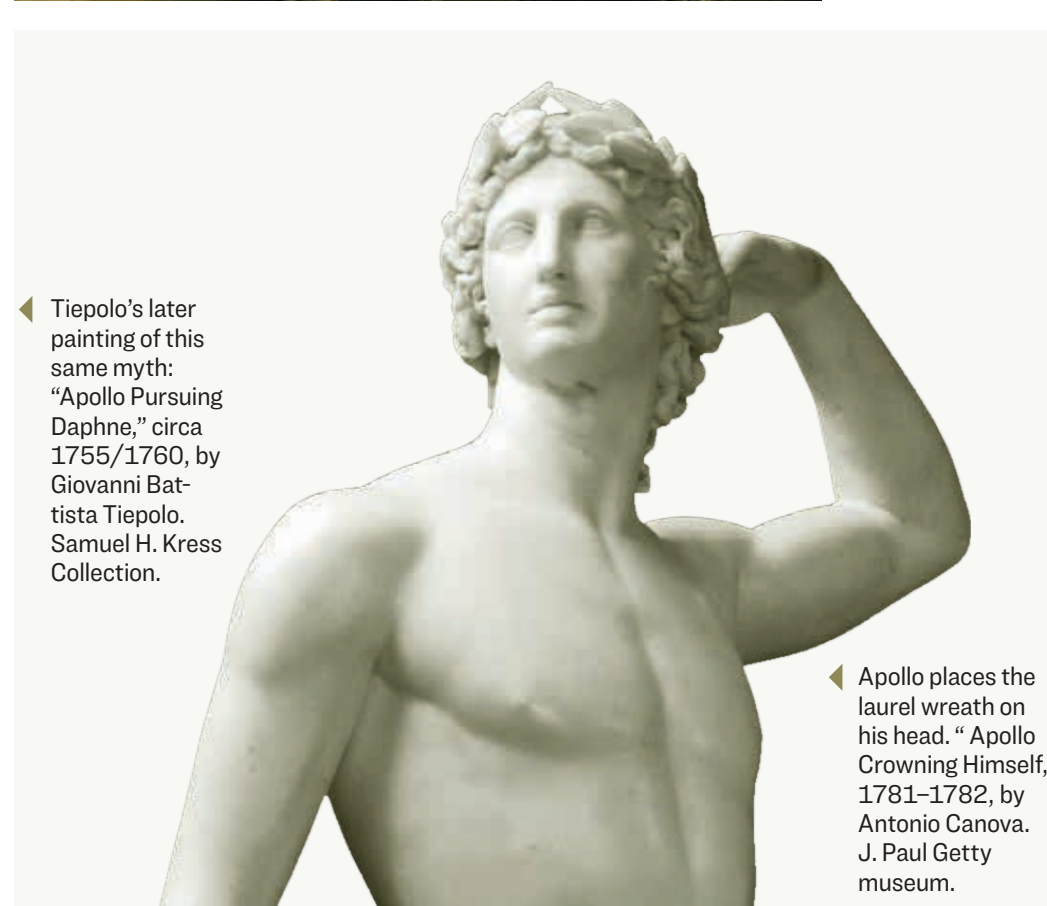


Tiepolo's later painting of this same myth: "Apollo Pursuing Daphne," circa 1755/1760, by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. Samuel H. Kress Collection.



The figures of Eros and Daphne's father, the river god Peneus, are included in this painting. "Apollo and Daphne," circa 1743–1744, by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. Louvre Museum

ALL PHOTOS PUBLIC DOMAIN



Apollo places the laurel wreath on his head. "Apollo Crowning Himself," 1781–1782, by Antonio Canova. J. Paul Getty museum.

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THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION

## ESSENCE OF CHINA

# Shen Yun's 13th Season Underway

## Moving audiences with authentic Chinese culture

Continued from Page 7



Antoine Treuille enjoyed Shen Yun at the Palais des Congrès in Paris on Jan. 19.

Antoine Treuille, director at Eramet, also saw Shen Yun perform in Paris. He said, "We all need spirituality. We all need to elevate our spirit. We all need hope, calm, serenity, and I find that this show evokes the peace we need today."

"It's really part of the human heritage," he said. "And it is these things that must absolutely be kept alive and not be lost."

"Shen Yun" translates as "the beauty of divine beings dancing," and Leo Carruthers, professor emeritus at Paris-Sorbonne University, who specializes in literature and civilization of the Middle Ages, talked about this spiritual facet of many cultures.

The name "Shen Yun" as well as the spirituality in the performance did not

surprise Mr. Carruthers, who said that in many cultures, researchers find the concept that culture, such as languages and the arts, comes from heaven. "And that's because it speaks to something that's inside the human being. It's his spiritual side," Mr. Carruthers said.



Leo Carruthers, professor emeritus at Paris-Sorbonne University, enjoyed Shen Yun Performing Arts at the Palais des Congrès in Paris on Jan. 16.

### Culture Interrupted

Traditional Chinese culture is spiritual. It was built upon the values established by Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, as well as lessons learned over the rise and fall of many dynasties in its 5,000-year culture.

But in 1949, the Chinese people were severed from their history and culture when the communists seized power and

set out to destroy the Chinese culture and replace it with a communist one.

Through campaigns like the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese who upheld their traditional culture were subjected to public humiliation and often death at the hands of the Communist Party. Countless other desecrations and untolerable violations have been committed against the Chinese culture and people by the Communist Party since.

Shen Yun does not embody the post-1949 culture, which was installed by a modern political group. Rather, it imparts the authentic 5,000-year-old traditional Chinese culture that had been painstakingly passed down through millennia.

But if the Chinese Communist Party has tried to destroy the tradition and values of the past, it's only been an interruption, as Shen Yun Performing Arts has made it its mission to revive the ancient culture, bringing forth the values, stories, and spirituality of the Chinese culture once again.

### Restoring the Culture

Chinese businessman Mike Li saw Shen Yun in Boston. He was moved to tears.

"What I see is not just performing arts," Mr. Li said. "It is China's traditional culture, a divinely inspired culture—one with a few thousand years of venerating the heaven and earth."

"For the past several thousand years, Chinese people venerated divine beings, heaven, and earth. Human interactions were harmonious ... and there was harmony between heaven and earth. However, this harmony no longer exists [in modern China]," he said.

In France, filmmaker Pascale Pouzadoux also felt something profound being conveyed by the Shen Yun performers, and said they were "inspired by something very ancient."

"They were trying to communicate to us a form of serenity, tranquility, a meditation on life and existence," she said. "The whole world should see this show."

Shen Yun Performing Arts will return to New York City with the 2019 production March 6-17 at The David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center.

The company will return to Fairfax, Virginia, and perform March 12-14. Shen Yun will perform in Purchase, New York, March 20-24.

And Shen Yun will perform in Washington, D.C., at The Kennedy Center Opera House April 17-21.

A full list of performances, and tickets for all performances worldwide are available at ShenYun.com

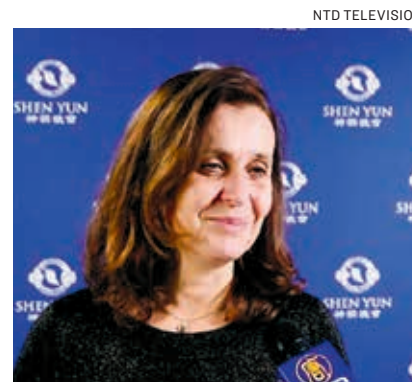
"The dance moves were so graceful," she said. "The dancers were light and floating. From their facial expressions to their fingers and then their feet, everything was rich in emotion."

Ms. Tanaka also felt something deeper as she watched the dancers.

"It was a voice coming from their soul," she said. "It was something that couldn't be put into words ... These artists passed on [to the audience] their compassionate thoughts in their dances."

"Today's experience was truly unbelievable," Ms. Tanaka said.

But it is not just those of Asian heritage who benefit or sense the depth and importance of the culture that Shen Yun seeks to restore.



Filmmaker Pascale Pouzadoux was among the audience for the second performance of the Shen Yun Performing Arts company in Paris on Jan. 17.

In France, filmmaker Pascale Pouzadoux also felt something profound being conveyed by the Shen Yun performers, and said they were "inspired by something very ancient."

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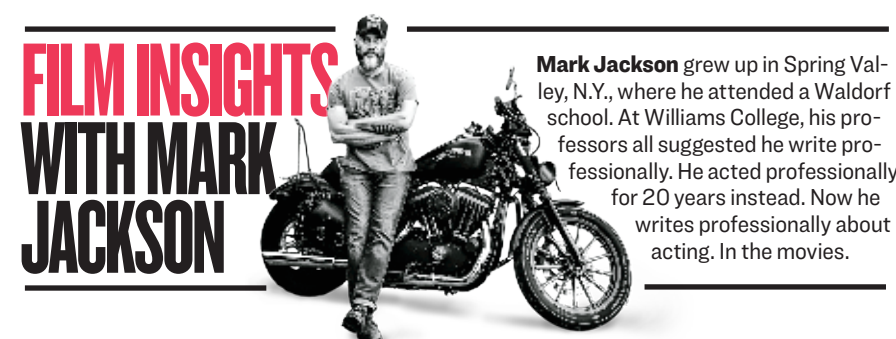
A full list of performances, and tickets for all performances worldwide are available at ShenYun.com

The Epoch Times considers Shen Yun Performing Arts the significant cultural event of our time and has covered audience reactions since the company's inception in 2006.



Japanese classical dance instructor Midori Tanaka enjoyed Shen Yun Performing Arts at the ROHM Theatre Kyoto, in Kyoto, Japan, on Jan. 17.

The dancers also moved Japanese classical dance instructor Midori Tanaka in Japan.



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.

# 'The Kid Who Would Be King'

## Gollum's Kid Teaches Your Kids About Chivalry

### MARK JACKSON

Gollum's kid can act! That would be Andy Serkis's little boy Louis Ashbourne Serkis, a brilliant child actor-drama, comedy, he does it all, from a deeply truthful place. He carries the whole movie on his young shoulders like a pro. He's the first reason you should take your kids to see the kid—excellent "The Kid Who Would Be King."

The second reason is that this is an extension of the Arthurian Legend, with lots of moral underpinnings having to do with chivalry. Thirdly, it's sort of like "A Dog's Purpose," because it's got lots in it about reincarnation.

Serkis's character Alex is King Arthur reincarnated. Sir Lancelot reincarnates as a school bully (Tom Taylor), Sir Kaye as a female, African-British bully's sidekick (Rhianna Dorris), Sir Bedevere as a chubby, nice Indian-British boy (Dean Chaumoo) of tremendous sincerity (and therefore bull-able), and Arthur's court magician, Merlin, incarnates variously as an owl, Patrick Stewart, and a tall, flamboyant boy, slightly reindeer-look-wise, of Alan Ruck in "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" (Angus Imrie). He's the most bull-able of all.

### The Sword in the Stone

After Arthur, er, Alex, and Sir Bedevere, er "Bedders," get chased by school bullies into a construction site on the way home from school, Alex finds a medieval broadsword sticking out of a stone, er, hunk of rebar concrete. He, of course, pulls the sword from the rebar.

Being a King Arthur fan—as all young boys whose moms give them King Arthur books are—Alex is pretty sure this must be the one and only Excalibur. So who must he himself be?

Can you imagine if you wound up being part of your favorite childhood fantasy story? We'd all like to be Gandalf, Arthur, or, as of this writing (in Think Coffee shop near Union Square), like the young man seated next to me reading "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"—Dumbledore. Or maybe Snape, judging by the greasy factor of his hair.

Where was I? Oh yes—Excalibur. It's back, as itself. Unrusty. The Lady of the Lake is back too, making her usual coy appearance: only showing an arm. A bit scaly here; definitely a mermaid's arm. Hmm. Yeah, maybe she was a mermaid.

Anyway, Merlin, going by the very, very cleverly disguised name of "Mertin," shows up at Alex's school to inform him that Morgana Le Fay (Rebecca Ferguson), who historically is King Arthur's evil half-sister, is getting ready to make a comeback and steal Excalibur, which she always felt entitled to. She's been moldering in an earthy dungeon of tree roots and stalagmites for centuries, and she's not happy.

During the rapidly approaching total eclipse



(L-R) Louis Ashbourne Serkis, Dean Chaumoo, and director Joe Cornish on the set of "The Kid Who Would Be King."

of the sun, she will rise again with an army of charred, smoldering, dark minions and rotten demons, riding skeletal horses. Is this perhaps too scary for the littles? I personally think so, but most children have unfortunately seen way worse by now.

### Chivalry

Chivalry's a good word—a good concept. I feel about chivalry much the same as Clint Eastwood's character in "In the Line of Fire" does, when he says to his young Secret Service protégé: "Cockamamie. That's a word your generation hasn't embraced yet. Maybe you oughta use it once in a while, just to keep it alive."

You don't hear much about chivalry these days; you hear about "toxic masculinity." But "The Kid Who Would Be King" is rife with chivalry usages. Because King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table were all about chivalry. And so, it would appear, is director Joe Cornish.

Chivalry went way past laying your suit of armor across a mud puddle for a lady to step across. Oh yes! The code of chivalry was a law of conduct for knights, a moral system going beyond the rules of combat and horsemanship to embracing bravery, courtesy, justice, mercy, generosity, faith, hope, nobility, honor, and gallantry toward women. That's good stuff. That's stuff your kids should see, and embrace, and use once in a while, just to keep it alive.

One of the chivalric themes that recurs is King Arthur's supposed ability to makes friends out of enemies. Because—as outlined in a comic book-like animated intro—Arthur's realm was pretty rowdy and unruly. Different clans, tribes, in squallor, squabbling in, as Monty Python has so



Louis Ashbourne Serkis stars in Twentieth Century Fox's "The Kid Who Would Be King."

unforgettably (and often) portrayed—miles and acres and yards of mud. Arthur united the Brits. And so the first half of "The Kid Who Would Be King" is about nerds Alex and Bedders trying to win over the cool kids and bullies. Alex learns that owning Excalibur won't get the whole trick of being an effective leader done by itself. He needs to comport himself with great honesty and integrity. It is the purity of heart in all things that elevates human existence.

### The Players

It's tempting to say that Rebecca Ferguson is completely underused as Morgana, but it's just the size of this particular role, as written, in this particular movie. She's such a captivating actress you just want to see her do more of whatever she's doing.

Dean Chaumoo is a real find, in what would be the Vern Tesso role, played by Jerry O'Connell in the 1986 "Stand By Me," and like Jerry O'Connell, Chaumoo will probably, in time, grow from a chubby child into a handsome leading man.

Angus Imrie as young Merlin cries out for a little bullying, so annoying is he early on. But he grows on you, although parents may not think happy thoughts about him in the future, what with their kids driving them completely batty imitating his spell-casting gesticulations: an amalgamation of clapping, snapping, using one hand as a keypad that the other texts on, and aircraft carrier-landing-signal-officer arm waving—all executed with great relish.

But again, this film belongs to young Serkis. It's a beautiful start to a long and storied career. Take your kids and let him teach them about chivalry, as the world as we know it rapidly returns to the dark ages.

**You don't hear much about chivalry these days; you hear about 'toxic masculinity.'**

### 'The Kid Who Would Be King'

**Director**  
Joe Cornish

**Starring**  
Louis Ashbourne Serkis, Dean Chaumoo, Tom Taylor, Patrick Stewart, Rebecca Ferguson, Angus Imrie, Rhianna Dorris

**Running Time**  
2 hours

**Rated**  
PG

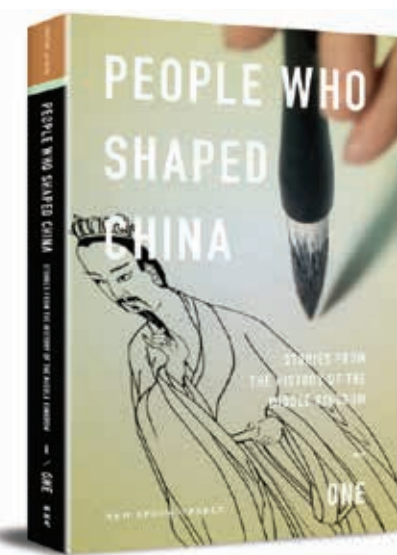
**Release Date**  
Jan. 25

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Patrick Stewart and Louis Ashbourne Serkis in "The Kid Who Would Be King."

# Uncover the Mysteries of the Middle Kingdom



### Awesome!!!

I'm a history buff, and I've been reading a lot of Chinese historical fiction. I originally tried delving into Chinese historical non-fiction, but everything I found was way too dry or political.

This book breaks down the most important historical figures of Chinese history into easy to read short stories that tell their historical impact. What's amazing about Chinese history is that **the stories are gripping, wise, and dramatic.** It's so fun to read and I highly recommend it to anyone looking to pick something up about Chinese history.

It's the perfect blend of fiction and non-fiction!

—Yinyin

### Fascinating stories!

To my surprise, the book is quite an easy read. It keeps the difficult Chinese names at the minimum and presents interesting stories and characters. Great content for my children to complement their Chinese language studies!

—Amazon customer



Good for beginners. Order it now! Paperback and ebook are available at [www.Amazon.com/dp/9881235014](http://www.Amazon.com/dp/9881235014).

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### THEATER REVIEW

## A Musician for the Ages

### DIANA BARTH

NEW YORK—Legendary Italian orchestra conductor Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957) was arguably one of the most seminal figures in 20th-century music. He was noted not only for his consummate knowledge of music and for his extraordinary skills of interpretation, but also for his fierce temperament and impatience with any playing but the highest quality.

Orchestra members put up with his displays of temper because they knew these outbursts were supported by Toscanini's love of the music and his native perfectionism and personal integrity.

In this production of "Maestro," writer Eve Wolf has set herself the task of creating a picture of the great conductor via letters, memoirs, and literature.

The production is one of a series of efforts by Wolf, herself a professional pianist, as part of the Ensemble for the Romantic Century's offerings, all dramatically interwoven with musical performance. In the past, these featured works on such notables as poets Emily Dickinson and Anna Akhmatova, and composer Ludwig van Beethoven.

It's difficult to portray a conductor satisfactorily, as much depends on his personal char-



John Noble as Arturo Toscanini in the Ensemble for the Romantic Century production of "Maestro."

isma. Here, however, actor John Noble acquires himself admirably, with his tall, elegant stature and imposing voice.

Much of the content is taken up with passionate letters to his mistress, Ada Mainardi. The couple, each married to someone else, could not often meet, and Toscanini, who held strong antifascist views, had fled Italy in the face of Mussolini's fascism.

The production features some back projections of that dictator's activities, as well as some of Hitler, apparently taken from newsreels, courtesy of projection designer David Bengali. A large part of the production features musical performances actually conducted by Toscanini, in the form of recordings. Movingly, there were also excellent live performances by a remarkable quintet of players. These included violinists Mari Lee and Henry Wang, violist Matthew Cohen, cellist Ari Evan, and pianist Zhenni Li. There was also an unexpected and delightful trumpet solo, by Maximilian Morel, of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," arranged by Morel himself.

There were several selections from Giuseppe Verdi's "Aida," an opera of which Toscanini was particularly fond. The excerpt "O terra addio" from that opera must have struck a particular chord (no pun intended), as it deals with exile from one's homeland.

Other musical excerpts were taken from Richard Wagner, Ottorino Respighi, and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

One flaw that might be found in the offering is that there was no specific connection brought out between the choice of musical excerpts and

the textual content of the show. Also, the music appeared to take up more time than did the actual text. The music was played beautifully, but a few patrons remarked that they had not expected so much of a concert.

The entire production is in the capable directorial hands of Donald T. Sanders.

Not to be overlooked are the recorded passages by actor Paul Sorvino playing major historical figures of the time.

"Maestro" is indeed a music-lovers delight, and there's enough on the great maestro himself to make a visit well worthwhile.



(L-R) Mari Lee and Henry Wang on violins, Zhenni Li on piano (with page turner Miles Mandwelle), Ari Evan on cello, and Matthew Cohen on viola.

### 'Maestro'

**The Duke on 42nd Street**  
229 W. 42nd St.  
New York

**Tickets**  
DukeOn42.org

**Running Time**  
2 hours, 20 minutes  
(one intermission)  
**Closes**  
Feb. 9

## ALBUM REVIEW



SHUTTERSTOCK

# Handel: Chandos Te Deum, Chandos Anthem No. 8

ROBERT HUGILL

Featuring conductor Adrian Butterfield and the London Handel Orchestra, a new Onyx Classics album showcases two of Handel's sacred pieces—"Chandos Te Deum" and "Chandos Anthem No. 8" ("O come let us sing unto the Lord")—in vivid re-creations of the original performance style. The pieces, written for the Duke of Chandos, were recorded in the very location where they were first performed: at the church of St. Lawrence.

Moreover, Butterfield used the sort of musicians and singers that Handel would have directed for the Duke of Chandos: one voice per part and single instrumental lines.

Handel's "Chandos" anthems, or settings of the Psalms for use in Anglican liturgy, were written for the Duke of Chandos from 1717 to 1718 when Handel was periodically in residence at Cannons, the Duke's residence. As the Duke was rebuilding his house, and it was not finished until 1720, the services took place in the church of St. Lawrence.

Unlike the house, the church survives and is one of the few locations where Handel's music can be heard in the venue for which it was first written. In addition, the church organ contains surviving pipework of its 1716 Gerard Smith organ, which was built for the church, but the program book does not specify if this organ was used in recording.

The musicians and singers for which Handel wrote were slightly odd, dependent as he was on those engaged by the Duke. While choirs usually include four voice parts: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, the earlier "Chandos" anthems were composed in three voice parts, with just soprano, tenor, and bass. With Handel's later anthems, he added four or five parts, but the extra voices were only tenor parts so that the music is technically either soprano, tenor, tenor, and bass or soprano, tenor, tenor, tenor, and bass.

On this disc, we get each line of the music performed by single voices, with what might be thought of as the alto line sung by a high tenor in a manner similar to recent Purcell recordings, and all supported by an instrumental ensemble using single instruments. The result is a long way from large-scale choral interpretations of this music, and the whole disc pulses with an engaging, intimate vitality.

We start with the "Chandos Te Deum," written in 1718 and, in fact, Handel's longest setting of the



**Conductor Adrian Butterfield has chosen a fine group of soloists.**

text. The "Chandos Anthem No. 8" was also written in 1718 (as was the pastoral "Acis and Galatea," and all probably used the same small group of soloists.)

For both the "Te Deum" and the "Anthem," Handel used a flexible structure of arias, duets, and ensembles, breaking the text up into small sections and moving fluidly from one scoring to another in a manner that would become familiar in his larger-scale pieces. Having the works sung by single voices means that these sections flow quite naturally with solos seeming to arise out of ensembles, and vice versa.

To carry off this style of performance requires singers attuned to both solo and ensemble singing. The problem sometimes with using one voice to a part can be that the ensemble sections are beau-

tifully blended but the solo passages sound a trifle bland and under-characterized.

Not here, as Adrian Butterfield has chosen a fine group of soloists: Grace Davidson, Charles Daniels, Nicholas Mulroy, Benedict Hymas, and Edward Grint. The tenors seem to get the lion's share of the solo moments, but there are some soprano solos as well. Grace Davidson manages in the ensemble passages to suggest a boy's treble voice, which would have been used in his time, while developing a more bravura style in her solo moments. Similarly, Charles Daniels and Nicholas Mulroy do not disappoint in the arias yet ensure that the vocal ensemble sections are very much a group event, and within those we never lose sight of individual voices either.

The style is crisp and vivid, with Butterfield clearly relishing the bite that his small assemblage is able to bring to the pieces. The music is arresting from the opening moments of the "Chandos Te Deum" and grips throughout the disc.

There are plenty of "Chandos" anthems (Handel wrote a total of 11), and I do hope that Adrian Butterfield and his ensembles give us more.

*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.*

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