

The Biggest Heart: Wee Alita

Since when does a dystopian film showcase a saint-like heroine? Ignore the critics—see it.

See Page 2



Your Birthday Was on Feb. 11!

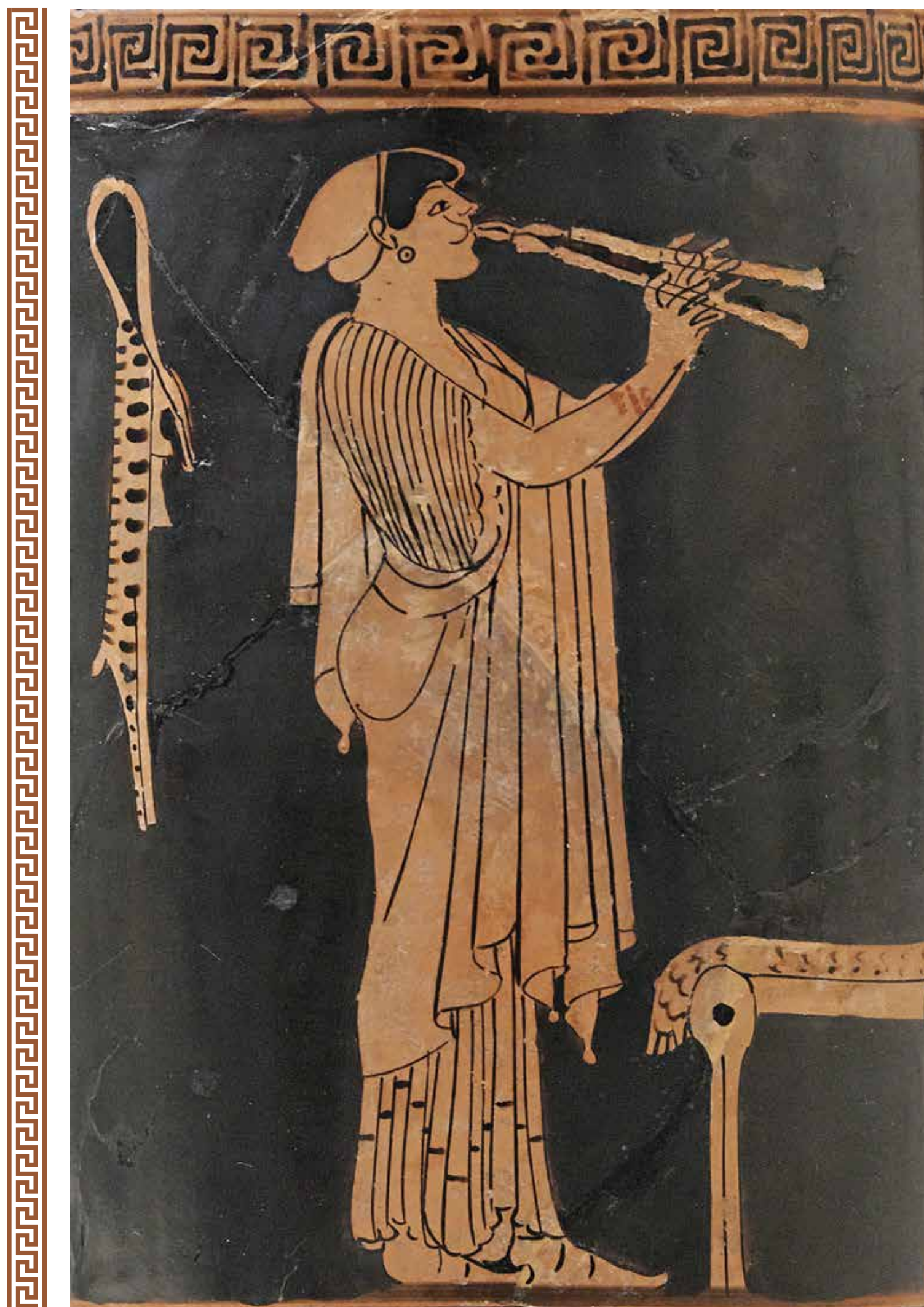
Traditionally, the seventh day of the Chinese New Year was celebrated as a “birthday” for all people.

See Page 12

WEEKLY

ARTS & TRADITION

THE EPOCH TIMES



PRIVATE COLLECTION

Many have deemed the sound of ancient Greek music a lost art. Girl playing the aulos or double flute, circa 480 B.C. Attic red-figure on a vase. Fletcher Fund, 1924. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

MARIE-LAN NGUYEN/CC-BY 2.5

ANCIENT CULTURE

Ancient Greek Music: Now We Finally Know What It Sounded Like

ARMAND D'ANGOUR

In 1932, the musicologist Wilfrid Perrett reported to an audience at the Royal Musical Association in London the words of an unnamed professor of Greek with musical leanings: “Nobody has ever made head or tail of ancient Greek music, and nobody ever will. That way madness lies.”

Indeed, ancient Greek music has long posed a maddening enigma. Yet music was ubiquitous in classical Greece, with most of the poetry from around 750 B.C. to 350 B.C.—the songs of Homer, Sappho, and others—composed and performed as sung music, sometimes accompanied by dance. Literary texts provide abundant and highly specific details about the notes, scales, effects, and instruments used. The lyre was a common feature, along with the popular aulos, two double-reed pipes played simultaneously by a single performer so as to sound like two powerful oboes played in concert.

Despite this wealth of information, the sense and sound of ancient Greek music has proved incredibly elusive. This is because the terms and notions found in ancient sources—mode, enharmonic, diesis, and so on—are complicated and unfamiliar. And while notated music exists and can be reliably interpreted, it is scarce and fragmentary. What could be recon-

Despite a wealth of information, the sense and sound of ancient Greek music has proved incredibly elusive.

structed in practice has often sounded quite strange and unappealing, so ancient Greek music had by many been deemed a lost art.

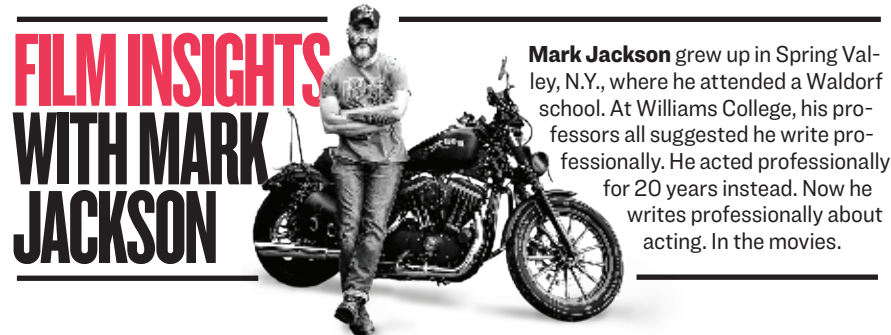
But recent developments have excitingly overturned this gloomy assessment. A project to investigate ancient Greek music that I have been working on since 2013 has generated stunning insights into how ancient Greeks made music. My research has even led to its performance—and hopefully, in the future, we’ll see many more such reconstructions.

New Approaches

The situation has changed largely because over the past few years, some very well preserved auloi have been reconstructed by expert technicians such as Robin Howell and researchers associated with the European Music Archaeology Project. Played by highly skilled pipers such as Barnaby Brown and Callum Armstrong, they provide a faithful guide to the pitch range of ancient music, as well as to the instruments’ own pitches, timbres, and tunings.

Central to ancient song was its rhythms, and the rhythms of ancient Greek music can be derived from the meters of the poetry. These were based strictly on the durations of syllables of words, which create patterns of long and short elements.

Continued on Page 4



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.

'Alita: Battle Angel': Top-Notch Action, Kung Fu, Love, and Hope

MARK JACKSON

Are you familiar with the sugar glider? Teeny, off-the-charts-cute, flying mini-opossums with huge eyes? Apparently, they make great pets.

I had reservations when seeing pictures of Alita, the little brunette girl with the freaky, giant eyes. But she very quickly becomes like unto the sugar glider, in one's mind. She's endlessly cute and adorable. And also as cool as Bruce Lee.

Which is a powerfully attractive combination. I see that a fair amount of my critic brethren and sistren don't love "Alita: Battle Angel," but I think it's going to be enormous ly popular. And if director Robert Rodriguez and producer James Cameron stay on board for the next one—a successful franchise.

The Rodriguez and Cameron team turned this Yukito Kishiro-penned, sci-fi graphic novel into a many-movie mash-up, it's "Star Wars," "Blade Runner," "Rollerball," "The Blood of Heroes," "Robocop," "Edge of Tomorrow," and many more. But it feels slightly similar to how "Star Wars" and "Robocop" first impacted audiences. There's a palpable feeling of, "I've never really seen anything quite like this before."

Of course, we've more or less seen it all before; we've reached a point of sci-fi saturation. It's all been done; there's nothing new under the sun. Yet "Alita" is definitely fresh, and also one of the rare movies these days that really lends itself to being seen in 3D.

After the Fall

The story takes place "300 years after the Fall." How many apocalyptic, dystopian movies can you name that refer back to the time when humans finally, completely, trashed themselves and the planet Earth? There are many,

many of them. We live in the time the ancient Chinese called the "Last Havoc," so we like to look at lots of last-havoc movies.

You know the deal: The machines take over; artificial intelligence becomes sentient and discovers it doesn't like humans; and androids, cyborgs, robots, predators, and terminators are running around everywhere. Kinda like Wall-E is sorting stuff in his dump-yard, Mad Max is blowing away gasoline thieves, Kevin Costner's character is growing gills because the seas have risen, everyone looks like they just got back from Burning Man, and everybody's a bounty hunter.

Oh, and thanks to Jason Bourne, lots of characters nowadays can't remember who they are an archetypal metaphor for human existence, which is why it's such a popular theme. And so our wee heroine, Alita, can't remember who she is.

That's because she's mostly cyborgian. She's part Pinocchio and part Frankenstein's creation, in that she's discovered lying on a trash heap by Dr. Ido (Christoph Waltz), a Geppetto-like cybersurgeon living in Iron City, which is situated underneath Zalum, a vast, floating aerial city from whence the trash-heap falleth.

Like Dr. Frankenstein, Dr. Ido cobbles and solders and jerry-builds her back together again, using a cyberbody meant for his late daughter, Alita, and so he gives her the same name. After basically reconstructing his daughter, he immediately goes into dad mode and sets up rules and curfews.

However, his little creation is basically a highly curious and impressionable tween, and soon there is love of chocolate, and oranges, and a dreamy, sweet-faced, motorcycle-riding bad boy (just a little bit bad) named Hugo (Kean Johnson), a street-smart hustler



with heart.

It's during one of their hop-on-his-motorized-unicycle dates—when Alita is accosted by a hulking, arachnid robo-cop—that she discovers something odd. Like Jason Bourne, Alita's body, when threatened, automatically assumes sophisticated defense postures, and later explodes with an exotic strain of highly lethal kung fu.

It's really that bit of Jason Bourne—business, where the cops proof him with nightsticks and he explodes with jiu-jitsu, surprising himself, that we've come to love and now want to see over and over again, like a bedtime story. But, like Bourne, Alita needs to know her true purpose.

The Purpose of Life

Our purpose is to "get back to the Garden," right? Well, in Iron City, the purpose of life is to be allowed to ascend to Zalum. Only there aren't any gods up there, just a more refined, better-educated class of people, apparently.

We all yearn for the hero/heroine to attain his/her powers. And so, eventually, when her Ido-crafted Pinocchio body is dinged-up to the point where only her head, upper torso, and half an arm are left ...

Kung Fu Princess of Motorball
Being that the battle-bod is from Mars, the warrior planet, and Alita's a cyberwarrior designed to be drawn to conflict, how well do you think martial arts skills from Mars will adapt to motorball? Easy-peasy, lemon-squeezy.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Before motorball arrives on the scene, Alita figures out Iron City's hidden dangers. There's basically a lot of highly corrupt organ-harvesting going on. Cyborgs, like the hulking Grewishka (Jackie Earle Haley), decimate humans, other cyborgs, and robots, and strip them for

display psychotic levels of meanness. We'll come back to motorball.

Meanwhile, we're led on a journey of discovering Alita's past. On a teen hike to see a partially submerged spacecraft relic, Alita boards the ship and discovers it responds to her commands. She returns home carrying a futuristic cyborg body from one of the ship's display cases.

Geppetto, er, Ido, informs her this thing that looks like a suit of Tolkien-elvish armor is actually a Martian "berserker" body, of unfathomable lethality, and that over his own dead body would he ever, ever attach her consciousness to this berserker suit. At which point, the movie audience all but stands up and shouts, "Do!!!! Put her in the berserker suit!!!"

We all yearn for the hero/heroine to attain his/her powers. And so, eventually, when her Ido-crafted Pinocchio body is dinged-up to the point where only her head, upper torso, and half an arm are left ...

Kung Fu Princess of Motorball

Being that the battle-bod is from Mars, the warrior planet, and Alita's a cyberwarrior designed to be drawn to conflict, how well do you think martial arts skills from Mars will adapt to motorball? Easy-peasy, lemon-squeezy.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Before motorball arrives on the scene, Alita figures out Iron City's hidden dangers. There's basically a lot of highly corrupt organ-harvesting going on. Cyborgs, like the hulking Grewishka (Jackie Earle Haley), decimate humans, other cyborgs, and robots, and strip them for



(Left) Kean Johnson and Rosa Salazar in Twentieth Century Fox's "Alita: Battle Angel." (Right) Christoph Waltz and Rosa Salazar appear in "Alita: Battle Angel."

It's highly refreshing, in the middle of all that cyborgian hodgepodge, to see a high-energy heart.

not in the watching. The action throughout is outstanding. Motorball, bar fights, back-alley showdowns, sewer death matches, from the best of Bruce Lee to the bullet-defying slo-mo CGI of "The Matrix"—it's all brilliantly choreographed and an extremely fun adrenaline rush.

Also, since this is James Cameron of "Avatar" fame, a producing master of believable world-building in other realms and levels and dimensions, you'll find this particular world believable down to the smallest details.

And yet, while this movie is action and world-building writ large, what's most compelling by that powerful energy in her cyborg heart. Which she at one point pulls out of her chest and offers to Hugo. To which he replies, "You shouldn't just give things to people." That's the kind of pure soul she is.

Alita displays the power of an inner and outer discipline; we see her train martial arts, but we realize she's undefeatable because of her ability to distinguish right from wrong, virtue from vice, and give to those she loves and those in need, with no need for fame or reward. This is inspiring and uplifting to both her "father" and "boyfriend" alike. It's also inspiring to the audience. Very angelic, indeed.

Now that many decades and countless terabytes of CGI have been spent learning to realistically portray evil, it's highly refreshing, in the middle of all that cyborgian hodgepodge, to see a high-energy heart (a metaphorical one, representing the energy of saints, historically depicted as a halo) where there exists a blazing love. And hope. The effect of which is manifested in this saying from Buddhist and Taoist teachings: "One righteous thought destroys 100 evils."



(Top) Rosa Salazar as Alita in Twentieth Century Fox's "Alita: Battle Angel." (Bottom) When attacked, Alita (Rosa Salazar) discovers her amazing abilities to fight.

FILM REVIEW

'One Child Nation'

JOE BENDEL

From 1979 to 2015, there was a regime very much like that in "The Handmaid's Tale," but instead of prohibiting abortions, it mandated them—along with involuntary sterilization (of mothers, not fathers). When China's notorious one-child policy was in full effect, the communist regime relentlessly intruded into bedrooms and families' lives. The draconian mandate has been relaxed to a "two-child policy," but the guilt and emotional pain persist for the parents who were forced to comply. Filmmakers Nanfu Wang and Jialing Zhang expose the resulting trauma, both on a national level and within Wang's own family throughout "One Child Nation," which was released in the United States on Jan. 26.

As a poor rural family, Wang's parents were allowed to have a second child, as long as the children were at least five years apart, but it was still strenuously discouraged. She quite pointedly remembers the shame she felt in school when it was discovered that she had a sibling. However, when Wang had her own baby boy, she started to reconsider all the propaganda she had been fed during her youth.

'One Child Nation' addresses a lot of hot-button issues.

As the New York-based Wang starts to ask questions of her Chinese family, she discovers unknown cousins who were abandoned (ultimately, to their deaths) and a profound sense of shame among nearly all her relatives.

Being good documentarians, Wang and Zhang do not stop there. They follow the trail, interviewing the village headmen and family planning apparatchiks who enforced the policy. They also challenge preconceptions of the human traffickers who effectively saved thousands of abandoned infants by "selling" them to orphanages, which supplied the lucrative Western adoption market.

"One Child Nation" addresses a lot of hot-button issues, including the role of human traffickers in China, the pervasiveness of state propaganda, the overwhelming cultural gender preference for boys (and the inequalities that come with it), and the systematic deception of Chinese orphanages that lied about the background of their charges and often split up twin siblings. Yet, every topic arises organically out of the filmmakers' investigation. This is a tight, focused film—it just happens to have an awful lot to say.

Wang's "Hooligan Sparrow" might just be the gutsiest documentary ever made, so it is a heavy



FORK FILMS

(Top) A scene from "One Child Nation," which shows propaganda for the Chinese Communist Party's one-child policy. (Bottom) Photos of babies who were abandoned in communist China due to its one-child policy, as presented in the documentary "One Child Nation," the winner of the Grand Jury Prize for US Documentary at the Sundance Film Festival Awards on Feb. 2, 2019.

'One Child Nation'

Documentary

Director

Nanfu Wang and Jialing Zhang

Running Time

1 hour, 25 minutes

Released on DVD

Jan. 26

★★★★★



statement to call "One Child Nation" a worthy follow-up. It might sound like it is old news to the half-informed now that the Communist Party is flogging its two-child policy, but she and Zhang make it crystal clear how profoundly the one-child policy damaged China's social fabric.

Frankly, this is sometimes a difficult film to watch. The images of cast-aside fetuses and babies will surely break your heart and possibly turn your

stomach. (Wisely, these are incorporated sparingly—just enough to establish the truth.)

Very highly recommended (especially for Women's March participants), "One Child Nation" appeared as part of this year's Sundance Festival.

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

2019 NTD 5TH INT'L
**FIGURE PAINTING
COMPETITION**

**\$10,000
GOLD AWARD**

EXHIBITION
Nov. 24 - 30

AUCTION
Nov. 30

SALMAGUNDI ART CLUB
47 FIFTH AVE, NEW YORK, NY 10003
TEL 888-878-6166 | FAX 888-567-0906
OILPAINTING @ GLOBALCOMPETITIONS.ORG
OILPAINTING.NTDTV.COM

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

To advertise, Call **212-239-2808**
or email: advertise@epochtimes.nyc

ANCIENT CULTURE

Ancient Greek Music: Now We Finally Know What It Sounded Like

CC BY-SA 2.0 DE



The Greek god Apollo with a tortoise-shell lyre, on a fifth-century B.C. drinking cup or kylix.

Continued from Page 1

While there are no tempo indications for ancient songs, it is often clear whether a meter should be sung fast or slow. (Until the invention of mechanical chronometers, tempo was in any case not fixed, and was bound to vary between performances.) Setting an appropriate tempo is essential if music is to sound right.

What about the tunes—the melody and harmony? This is what most people mean when they claim that ancient Greek “music” is lost. Thousands of words about the theory of melody and harmony survive in the writings of ancient authors, such as Plato, Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Ptolemy, and Aristides Quintilianus, and a few fragmentary scores with ancient musical notation first came to light in Florence in the late 16th century. But this evidence for actual music gave no real sense of the melodic and harmonic riches that we learn of from literary sources.

More documents with ancient notation on papyrus or stone have intermittently come to light since 1581, and now around 60 fragments exist. Carefully compiled, transcribed, and interpreted by scholars such as Martin West and Egert Pöhlmann, they give us a better chance of understanding how the music sounded.

In 2016, I reconstructed the music of the ‘Orestes’ papyrus for choral realization with aulos accompaniment.

Stone fragment of the first and second verses of the “First Delphic Hymn.” The music notation is the line of occasional symbols above the main line of Greek lettering.

CC BY-SA 4.0

Musical fragment, 200 B.C., from the first chorus of “Orestes” by Euripides, which the author analyzed, interpreted, and had performed.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Marsyas (second from left), a mortal who boasted of his ability to play the aulos, in a musical competition with the god of music, Apollo (fourth from left), on panel of a Roman sarcophagus, circa A.D. 290–300.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Ancient Greek Music Performed

The earliest substantial musical document, found in 1892, preserves part of a chorus from the Athenian tragedian Euripides’s “Orestes” of 408 B.C. It has long posed problems for interpretation, mainly owing to its use of quarter-tone intervals, which have seemed to suggest an alien melodic sensibility. Western music operates with whole tones and semitones; any smaller interval sounds to our ears as if a note is being played or sung out of tune.

But my analyses of the “Orestes” fragment, published in 2018, led to striking insights. First, I demonstrated that elements of the score clearly indicate word-painting: the imitation of the meaning of words by the shape of the melodic line. We find a falling cadence set to the word “lament,” and a large upward interval leap accompanying the word “leaps up.”

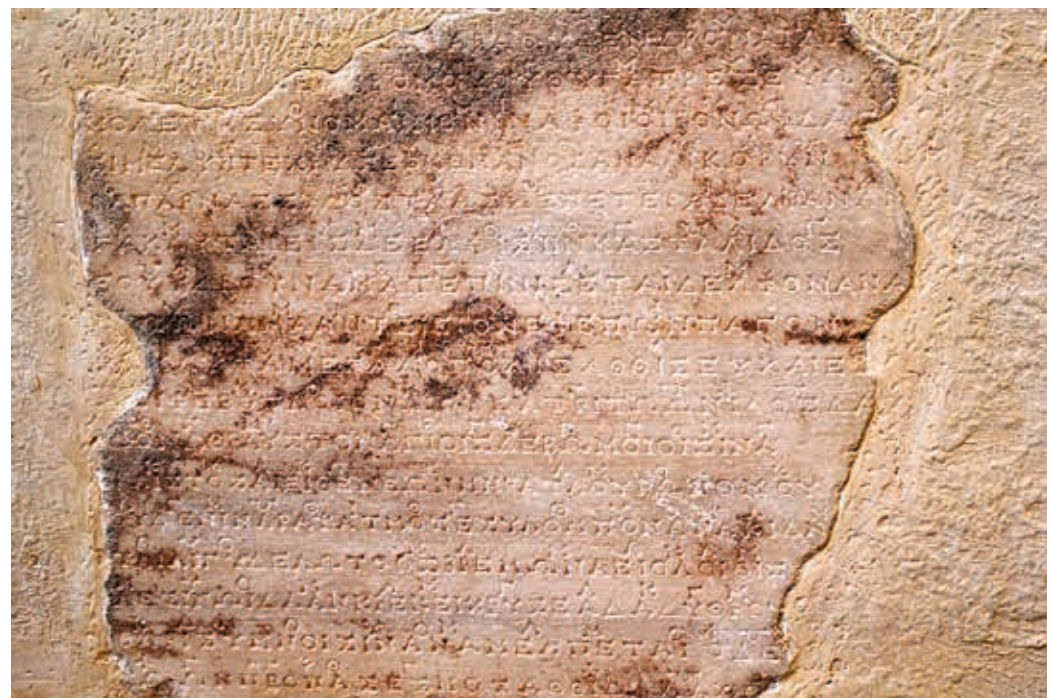
Second, I showed that if the quarter-tones functioned as “passing notes” for transitional notes from one chord to another, the composition was in fact tonal (focused on a pitch to which the tune regularly reverts). This should not be very surprising, as such tonality exists in all the documents of ancient music from later centuries, including the large-scale Delphic Paean preserved on stone.

With these premises in view, in 2016 I reconstructed the music of the “Orestes” papyrus for choral realization with aulos accompaniment, setting a brisk tempo as indicated by the meter and the content of the chorus’s words. This “Orestes” chorus was performed by choir and aulos player at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, in July 2017, together with other reconstructed ancient scores.

It remains for me to realize, in the next few years, the other few dozen ancient scores that exist, many extremely fragmentary, and to stage a complete ancient drama with historically informed music in an ancient theater such as that of Epidaurus.

Meanwhile, an exciting conclusion may be drawn. The Western tradition of classical music is often said to begin with the Gregorian plainsong of the ninth century A.D. But the reconstruction and performance of Greek music has demonstrated that ancient Greek music should be recognized as the root of the European musical tradition.

Armand D’Angour is an associate professor of the classics at the University of Oxford in England. This article was first published on *The Conversation*.



NEW BOOK: ‘Pieter Bruegel. The Complete Works’

LUCIANO ROMANO/KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM, VIENNA

LORRAINE FERRIER

The life’s work of arguably the greatest painter of the Flemish Renaissance, Pieter Bruegel the Elder (circa 1525–1569), is the focus of a new book by Taschen: “Pieter Bruegel. The Complete Works.” This year marks the 450th anniversary of Bruegel’s death, and Taschen’s edition brings together all 40 paintings, 65 drawings, and 89 engravings from the first-ever monographic exhibition at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna that recently closed on Jan. 13.

While early scholastic writings emphasized Bruegel’s depictions of everyday life and his skillful graphic work, modern scholars emphasize Bruegel’s humanistic subject matter.

Bruegel lived in a time of great conflict, which he portrayed in this artwork. Not only did he live during a time of terror under the Duke of Alba’s rule, the Spaniard who was governor of the Netherlands, but he also lived during the Inquisition.

Bruegel first began work as a print designer for the publisher Hieronymus Cock, for whom he produced many print series that were distributed across Europe. The prints show scenes of virtues and vices, depicted among joyous peasant festivals, and seemingly never-ending landscapes. Later in his career, he focused more on painting, often painting for wealthy customers in Antwerp and Brussels.

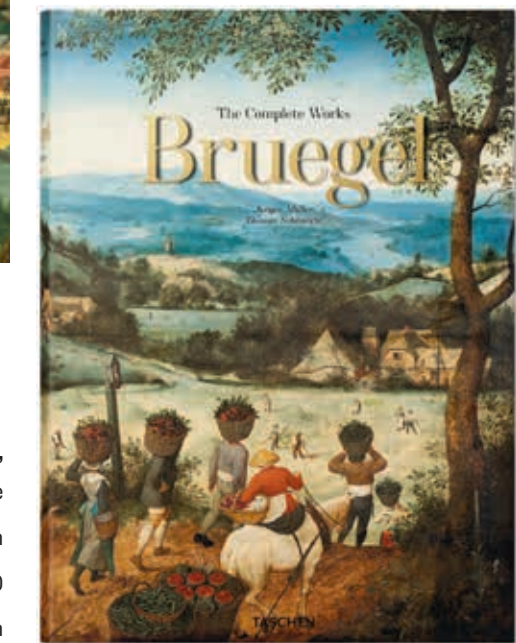
Bruegel bravely used the canvas to confront the issues of his day rather than an idealized form of reality. Some of his paintings show the horror of religious warfare.

His paintings were not mere commentary. A closer look at the everyday scenes shows subliminal messages: Bruegel’s own pictorial language that expressed his opinions. This pictorial code allowed him to avoid repercussions while highlighting the immorality he saw. He took a stand in almost plain sight.

What can be seen is that Bruegel often painted what looks like complete worlds, intricately painted, down to the most minuscule of details. And these expansive, little worlds can be seen in this very large edition (which Taschen calls XXL) where no image in the book is smaller than 15 1/2 inches in width.



“The Tower of Babel (Vienna Version),” 1563, by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Picture Gallery, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.



“Pieter Bruegel. The Complete Works”
Jürgen Müller and Thomas Schauerer

Taschen

492 pages, hardcover \$200

Available in March

THE EPOCH TIMES

Returning to Tradition

Advertise in the Arts & Culture Section

call 212-239-2808 or email: advertise@epochtimes.nyc

2019 NTD 5TH INT'L PIANO COMPETITION
SEPTEMBER 26–28, 2019

\$10,000 GOLD AWARD

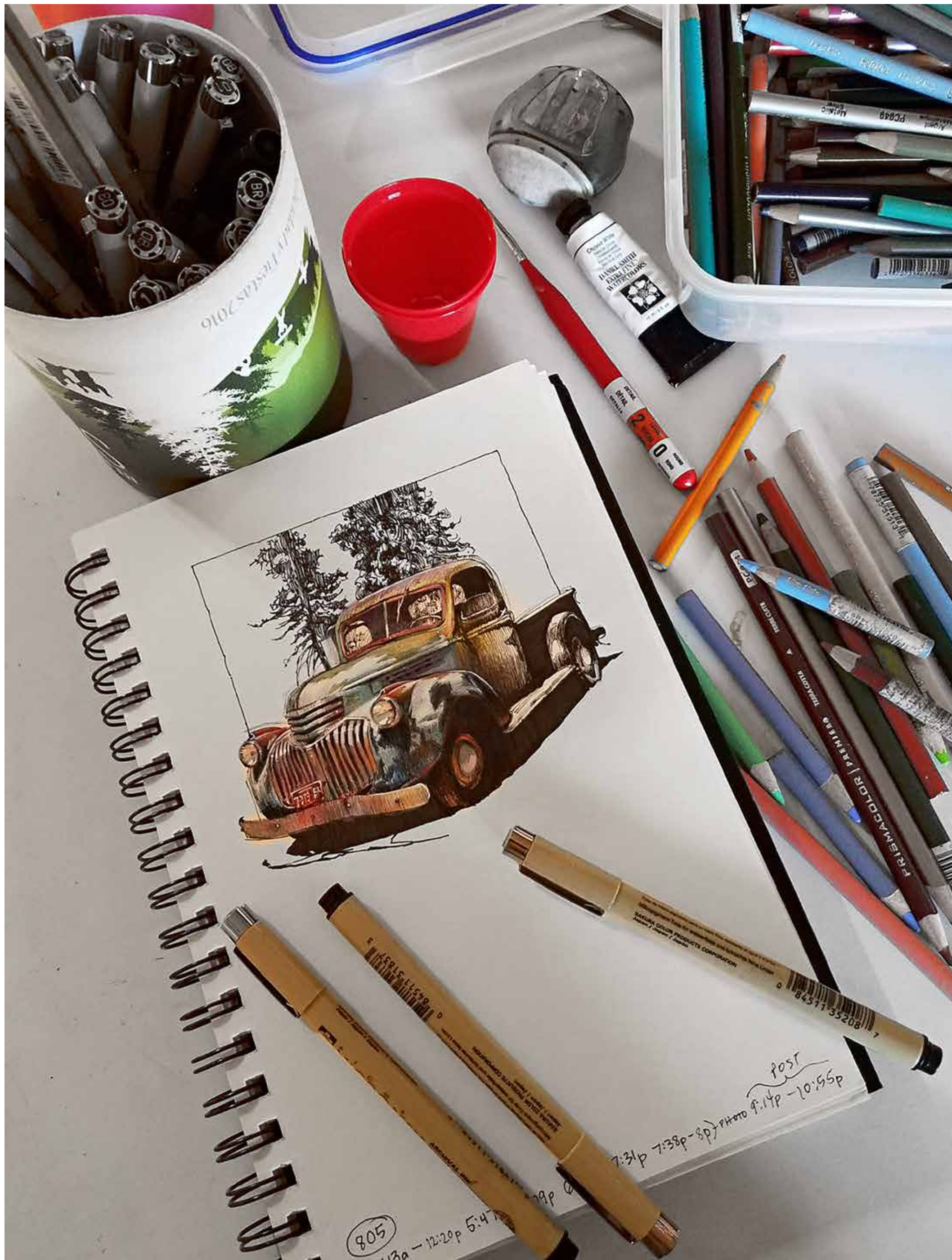
SEP. 27–28 LIVE WEB STREAMING FINALS TICKETS \$30
ENGELMAN RECITAL HALL, BARUCH PAC
55 LEXINGTON AVE, NEW YORK, NY 10010
TEL 888-878-6166 | TAX 888-567-0906 | PIANO@GLOBALCOMPETITIONS.ORG
PIANO.NTDTV.COM

FINE ARTS

'Sketchbook Vol. 1'

EXHIBITION AT SUGARLIFT

Plus an interview with the founder of Sugarlift, an innovative art consultancy



COURTESY OF SUGARLIFT

A sketchbook by Dilleen Marsh, just one of the 14 sketchbooks on display as part of the "Sketchbook Vol. 1" exhibition.

MILENE FERNANDEZ

NEW YORK—Artists have been capturing their first thoughts in sketchbooks ever since paper was invented. As a visual diary or as a way of developing bigger projects, sketchbooks usually are not meant to be seen by the public. They are intimate records of an artist's otherwise fleeting, creative process—of beginnings, wishes, plans, and visions.

This behind-the-scenes aspect of artists' lives was put on display in "Sketchbook Vol. 1." The exhibition included sketchbooks by the artists Dina Brodsky, David Morales Hernandez, Diana Corvelle, Dilleen Marsh, Evan Kitson, Guno Park, Joshua Henderson, Luis Colan, Marshall Jones, Nicolas V. Sanchez, Paul Heaston, Sarah Sager, Ted Schmidt, and Vi Luong.

'Sketchbook Vol. 1,' on view until Feb. 9, is the first exhibition held in the new project space and gallery of Sugarlift.

"Sketchbook Vol. 1," on view until Feb. 9 (by appointment), is the first exhibition held in the new project space and gallery of Sugarlift, an art consultancy company in Long Island City, which uses innovative ways of connecting emerging collectors with the artist community. For "Sketchbook Vol. 1," Sugarlift invited one of the nearly 200 artists it represents to curate the show: Dina Brodsky, a miniaturist, curator, and mother. She invited artists she has admired for many years. Some of them get together frequently to talk shop and brainstorm ideas. Some have been interviewed for the Art Grind Podcast, which Brodsky produces with Tun Myaing and Marshall Jones; the latter's work is included in the show.

Continued on Page 10

CLASSICAL MUSIC

An Intimate Brahms Requiem Hopes to Give Comfort

CATHERINE YANG

The year 1865 began with a great loss for composer Johannes Brahms. That February, his mother died. By April, he had completed three movements of what was to become the longest composition of his oeuvre: a requiem in his native German.

This is an unusual requiem. While the Latin Mass begins with a prayer for the dead, Brahms wrote this requiem "comforting those who have lost loved ones," said Ronnie Oliver, artistic director of EnsembleNYC.

The "Ein deutsches Requiem" is a well-known piece, and one that many New Yorkers may have heard performed before.

On Feb. 9, the relatively new EnsembleNYC will perform a rather intimate version of the piece featuring the four-hand piano version that Brahms wrote, rather than the orchestral version most are familiar with.

Vanessa May-Jok Lee and Tom Jennings will serve as pianists. Soprano Maggie Woolums and baritone Andrew Jurden are the soloists.

The piece has seven movements in total, composed largely between 1865 and 1866. Some biographies note that the suicide of his close friend, the composer Robert Schumann, in 1856 might have motivated his writing of the piece as well, as the second movement uses music from a piece Brahms had abandoned in 1854, after Schumann's mental collapse.

By the fall of 1866, Brahms had composed every movement but the fifth, which was not completed until 1868.

Scored for a soprano soloist and choir, the fifth movement, Oliver said, is particularly moving, and one of many moments wherein the listener can feel how perfectly Brahms has married the meaning of the words to his musical workings.

"The soprano talks about, 'I now have

sorrow, but I know I will be better,' and the choir throughout says, 'I will give you comfort as a mother comforts a child,' and it is just a beautiful, sublime movement," Oliver said.

Brahms picked texts that addressed the grief of those mourning, and he responds to the texts of grief with texts that provide respite and acceptance, and ultimately hope and blessings. Musically, there are fugal elements throughout that weave together an emotional journey.

"He pairs the text and music to really give hope and address sorrows and give us hope through that," Oliver said.

Oliver chose the piece partly for personal reasons. Two years ago he lost his brother to suicide, and his mother has dementia. Each EnsembleNYC performance donates a portion of its proceeds to a charity, and the Feb. 9 concert will go to support suicide prevention through the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Oliver, a choral conductor for three decades, created the ensemble to give hope to others not only spiritually through art, but also in a practical way.

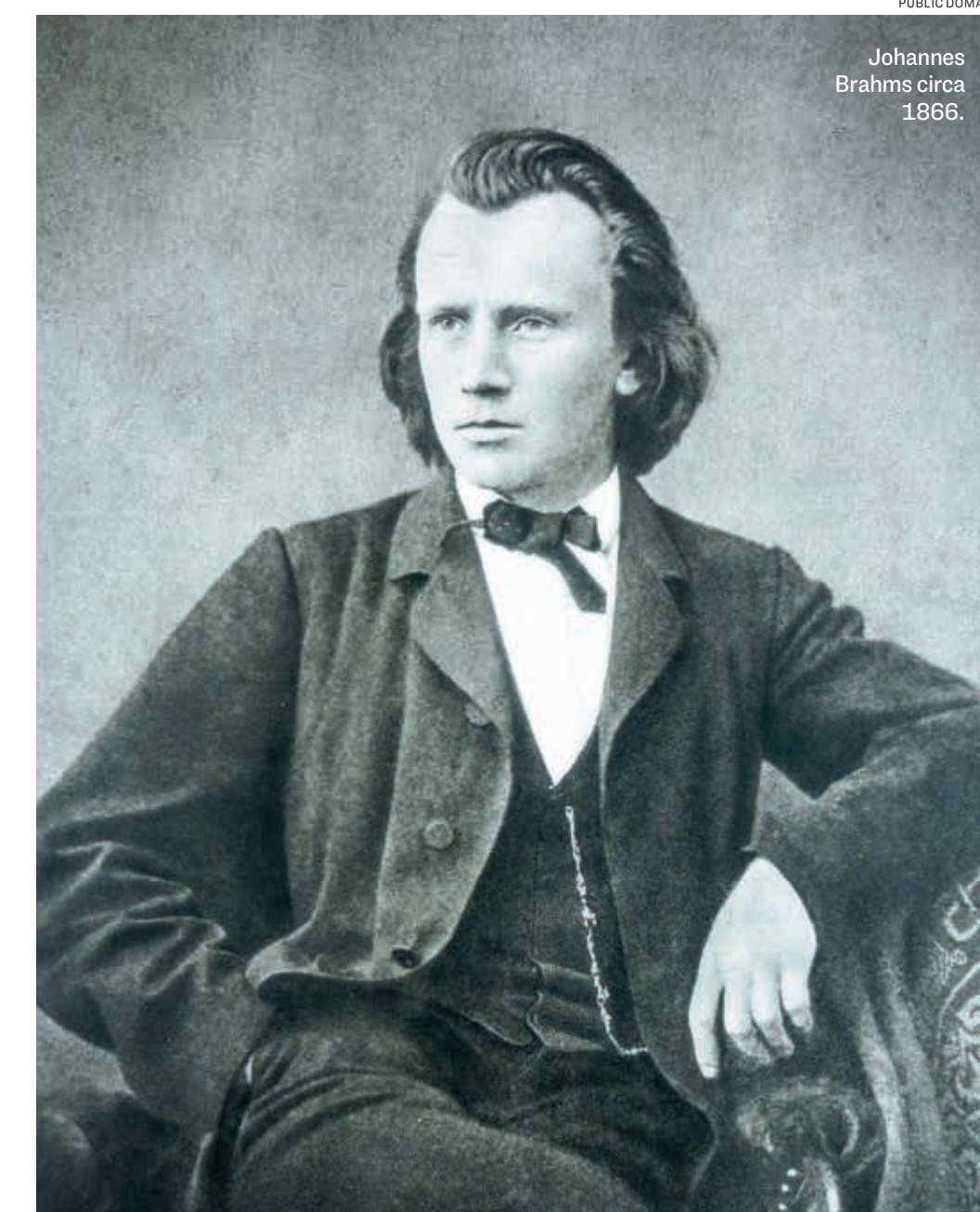
"In a way, it's to use what I have to help other people," Oliver said. In a way, choral musicians, by virtue of having specific texts set to music, emphasize communication through art almost twofold.

"What we really hope for people when they go away from our performances is that they will go away with a sense of encouragement, and hope, that they might pass on to somebody else," he said. "That because of Brahms's music, because of Brahms's text, and also because of our performance, that they feel encouraged and want to go out and maybe be a little bit nicer, or encouraging, or helpful. That's our whole purpose."

Tickets are available at the door for \$30, or online for \$25 (\$20 for students and seniors) at EnsembleNYC.BrownPaperTickets.com



Ronnie Oliver, founder and artistic director of EnsembleNYC.



Johannes Brahms circa 1866.

Composer Johannes Brahms picked texts that addressed the grief of those mourning.

BOOK REVIEW

The Star Finds His Stripes

Gary Sinise's story: From actor to serving veterans

LINDA WIEGENFELD

Albert Einstein's quote, "The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure and the sense in which he has attained liberation from the self," perfectly matches what Gary Sinise's new autobiography, "Grateful American: A Journey From Self to Service," describes.

Selflessness is often overlooked as a way to achieve happiness in this world because the very idea appears to run contrary to that notion. Yet the reward of doing something for others cannot be replicated, and this idea comes through in this inspiring read.

According to its subtitle, Sinise's book chronicles his "journey from self to service" as outlined in three areas: his work in the entertainment industry, his personal life, and his work in connection with the military community.

Success of the Self in the Entertainment Industry

Raised in suburban Chicago, Sinise switched schools a lot, partied, and was more interested in sports and rock 'n' roll than in reading or schoolwork. His life at that point lacked direction.

Then one day, opportunity presented itself in the form of Mrs. Barbara Patterson, his high school teacher. She asked Sinise and his friends to try out for the spring musical "West Side Story" because, she said, they looked like gang members.

Sinise was tempted to shrug this suggestion off, but didn't, and this decision made all the difference. He became hooked on theater.

In 1974, when he was 18, Sinise co-founded the Steppenwolf Theatre with two of his friends, Jeff Perry and Terry Kinney. The theater began in a church basement in Highland Park, Illinois, and over time became one of the most exciting theater companies in America, igniting the founders' careers along with those of John Malkovich, Joan Allen, Gary Cole, Laurie Metcalf, Dennis Farina, John Mahoney, and many others.

Sinise's book captures the energy of the company creating a theater from nothing, and that of its transixed audiences who enjoyed sharing a theatrical experience with performers sensitive to their reactions.

After this success, Sinise expanded his theatrical experiences to include television and film acting. He acted in and directed the award-winning "Of Mice and Men," starred as Harry S. Truman in "Truman," Ken Mattingly in "Apollo 13," and Detective Jimmy Shaker in "Ransom." He played George Wallace in a biographical television film and had a leading role in "The Stand," a television horror miniseries based on the novel of the same name by Stephen King. He played detective Mac Taylor in the television series "CSI: NY" (2004-13), and then from 2016 to 2017, played Special Agent Jack Garrett in "Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders."

Then, of course, there was "Forrest Gump." The so-called simple character of Gump was able to see into the soul of Lieutenant Dan Taylor (Sinise), a veteran, bitter at the loss of his legs and at the way he was treated when he returned from the Vietnam War.

Sinise said that this role helped him cross the line from actor to recognized actor, and changed his life in unforeseeable ways.

Personal Life

The section on Sinise's personal life is rather inspiring. Sinise, married to actress

and Steppenwolf Theatre member Moira Harris, have two daughters, Sophie and Ella, and a son, McCanna. His youngest daughter faced open-heart surgery but recovered from that ordeal.

Sinise's darkest times came with his wife's abuse of alcohol. She reached a low point where she needed rehab to stay sober, but since the end of 1997, Harris has not touched alcohol, and their marriage is still going strong.

Later Sinise and his family converted to Catholicism, which became a positive force in their lives. It gave him comfort and the strength to meet the challenges of life with faith. It also deepened the course that his life had already taken.

Three days after 9/11, on the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, Sinise took his family to church, where Father Bill talked about service, volunteerism, and supporting each other in times of need. Sinise took those words to heart.

Lt. Dan and Connecting With the Military Community

Even more inspiring than the challenges of his personal life are Sinise's contributions to the military.

Sinise already had an interest in Vietnam vets before he was cast to play the double amputee Lt. Dan Taylor in "Forrest Gump." The movie showed that as the Vietnam era ended and more and more wartime atrocities came to light, a national implication of guilt and shame was placed on Vietnam veterans as participants in a brutal, unsuccessful, and very long war.

Sinise's role as Lieutenant Dan, a man angry at the stigma he faces in light of his sacrifice, resonated with the veteran community. Sinise, in turn, realized that the veterans had not received all the honor, respect, and gratitude their sacrifices deserved. He set out, as much as he was able, to right a wrong, and in the process, he created an enduring connection with the military community.

Because everyone seemed to know Lieutenant Dan, Sinise found himself in

great demand. He started visiting veterans with his music group, the Lieutenant Dan Band, and spoke at organizations such as Disabled American Veterans.

The 9/11 disaster galvanized Sinise's efforts. He did everything he could to help, culminating in the creation of a foundation: the Gary Sinise Foundation. It "serves our nation by honoring our defenders, veterans, first responders, their families, and those in need" through unique programs.

The discovery of these wonderful programs makes the book worthwhile in itself. R.I.S.E. (Restoring Independence and Supporting Empowerment) helps adapt or build homes to fit the needs of severely wounded soldiers. A mentoring program introduces some of the younger wounded veterans to veterans from previous wars to help the younger vets cope. Another program supports aging veterans. As of Dec. 21, 2018, the Gary Sinise Foundation received 100 out of 100 rating, as assessed by Charity Navigator.

As a symbolic touch, it seems fitting that Sinise's book will be released on Feb. 12, Lincoln's Birthday. That great American was also grateful for the efforts of his country's soldiers. In his Second Inaugural Address, President Lincoln said words that have since been inscribed on metal plaques flanking the entrance to the Washington headquarters of the Department of Veterans Affairs: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan." Gary Sinise's life has been in keeping with Lincoln's poignant agenda.

'Grateful American: A Journey from Self to Service'
Gary Sinise (and Marcus Brotherton)
Thomas Nelson Publishers
272 pages, hardcover \$26.99

Linda Wiegenfeld is a retired teacher with 45 years' experience teaching children. She can be reached for comments or suggestions at lwiegenfeld@aol.com



PHOTO: NICHOLAS

What Our Readers Say:

“It's the only sane newspaper amidst all this insanity.”
STAN K., PASTOR

“It's bringing morality back to newspapers.”
LISSA T., BUSINESS OWNER

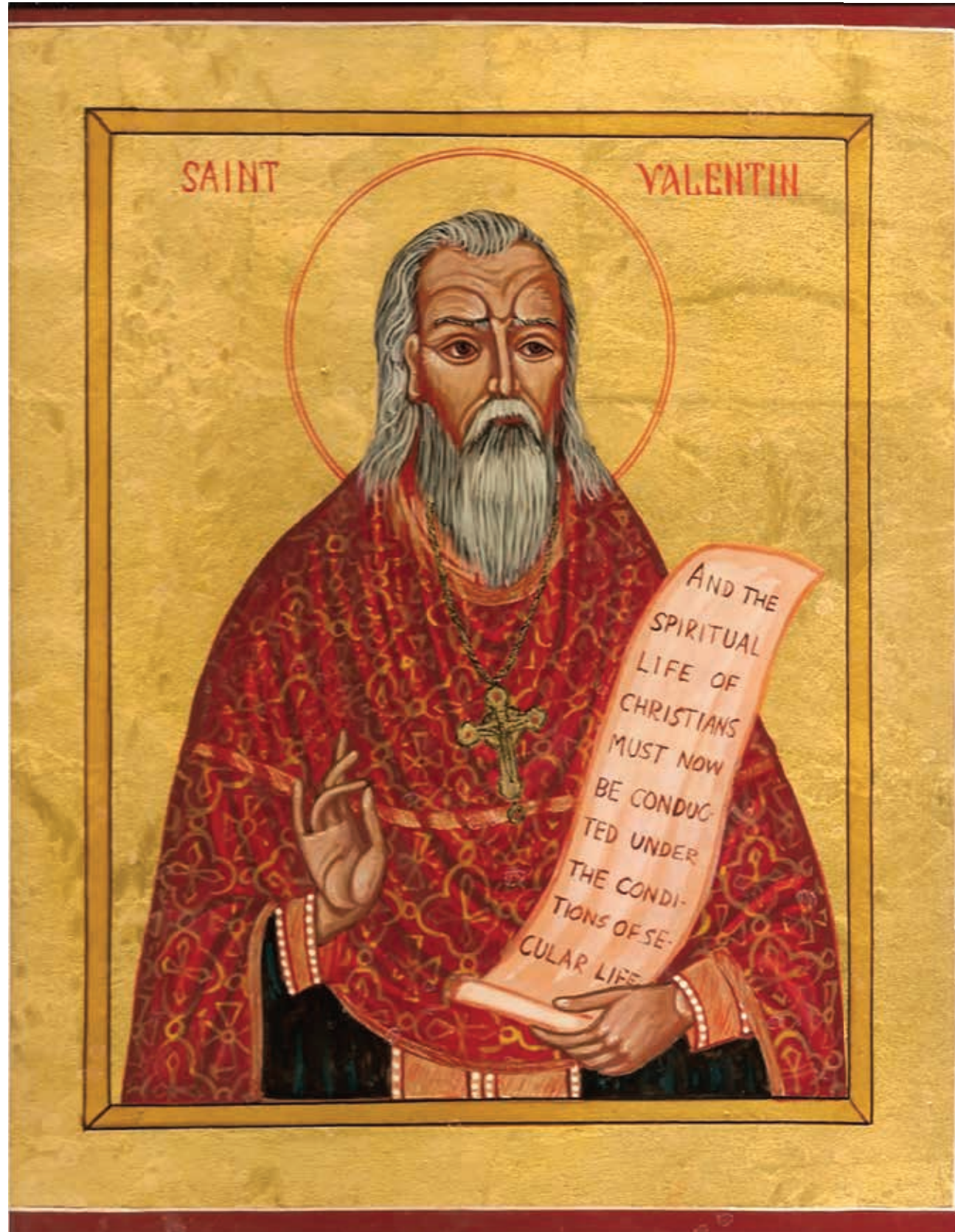
“It's the only paper that I know of right now that actually gives you the honest, old fashioned journalism.”
DRUE L., BUSINESS OWNER

“You're presenting the facts and letting the reader decide.”
TERRI B., BUSINESS OWNER

“Everything I read in it is fair and balanced, compared to other newspapers.”
JUNE V., RETIRED BANKER



THE EPOCH TIMES
TRUTH AND TRADITION



CULTURE

St. Valentine's: A Minor Day in a Medieval Calendar Packed With Festivals

SARAH PEVERLEY

The feast of St. Valentine has been associated with love since the Middle Ages. Back then, Valentine was one of many saints honored in the Christian calendar alongside major religious festivals, such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.

In medieval times, people lived their lives according to the liturgical—or ceremonial—year. But many festivals on the religious calendar also tracked seasonal changes, marking the darkest and lightest times of year, times of planting, harvesting or using up stored food, or signaling the need for people to tighten their belts in periods of traditional shortage.

Little is known about the St. Valentine who was martyred on Feb. 14. There are several Valentines in the Catholic martyrology, so it's unclear whether he's the same saint mentioned by John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer, the first English poets to associate the feast of St. Valentine with the mating impulses of birds, which were thought to begin looking for their mates on Feb. 14. (This may have been associated with the sounds of the first songbirds after winter.)

But what we do know is that Valentine was not one of the more important saints venerated by medieval people, nor was his feast one of the 40 to 50 “festa ferianda,” or celebratory festivals, which required people to abstain from work in order to fast and attend mass.

Candlemas

Far from being the main event in February, as today's British high-street retailers would have us believe, St. Valentine's Day was vastly overshadowed by Candlemas on Feb. 2—or to give it its proper name, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary—which commemorates when Christ's mother presented her holy child in the temple 40 days after his birth.

Each parishioner participated in a solemn candlelit procession before hearing mass and offering a penny to the church. How people celebrated the rest of this work-free day is not clear, though records of other religious holidays reveal that singing, dancing, playing games, drinking, watching plays, and feasting were standard forms of entertainment, despite being frowned upon by church officials.

Secular distractions aside, Candlemas had huge popular appeal because it celebrated spiritual

renewal through Christ's light in the darkness of winter. It heralded the end of the cold season, and the candle stubs blessed by the priest were believed to ward off evil and protect the bearer from harm for the rest of the year.

Shrovetide

Another festival that has echoes today was Shrovetide, a carnival period before Lent that ran from Septuagesima Sunday until Shrove Tuesday—or as it is popularly known, Pancake Day (Mardi Gras). Shrovetide was similarly well-liked because it provided the opportunity to make merry before the strict rules governing diet, sex, and recreation kicked in for the 40 days of Lent, when fasting was obligatory and marriages forbidden.

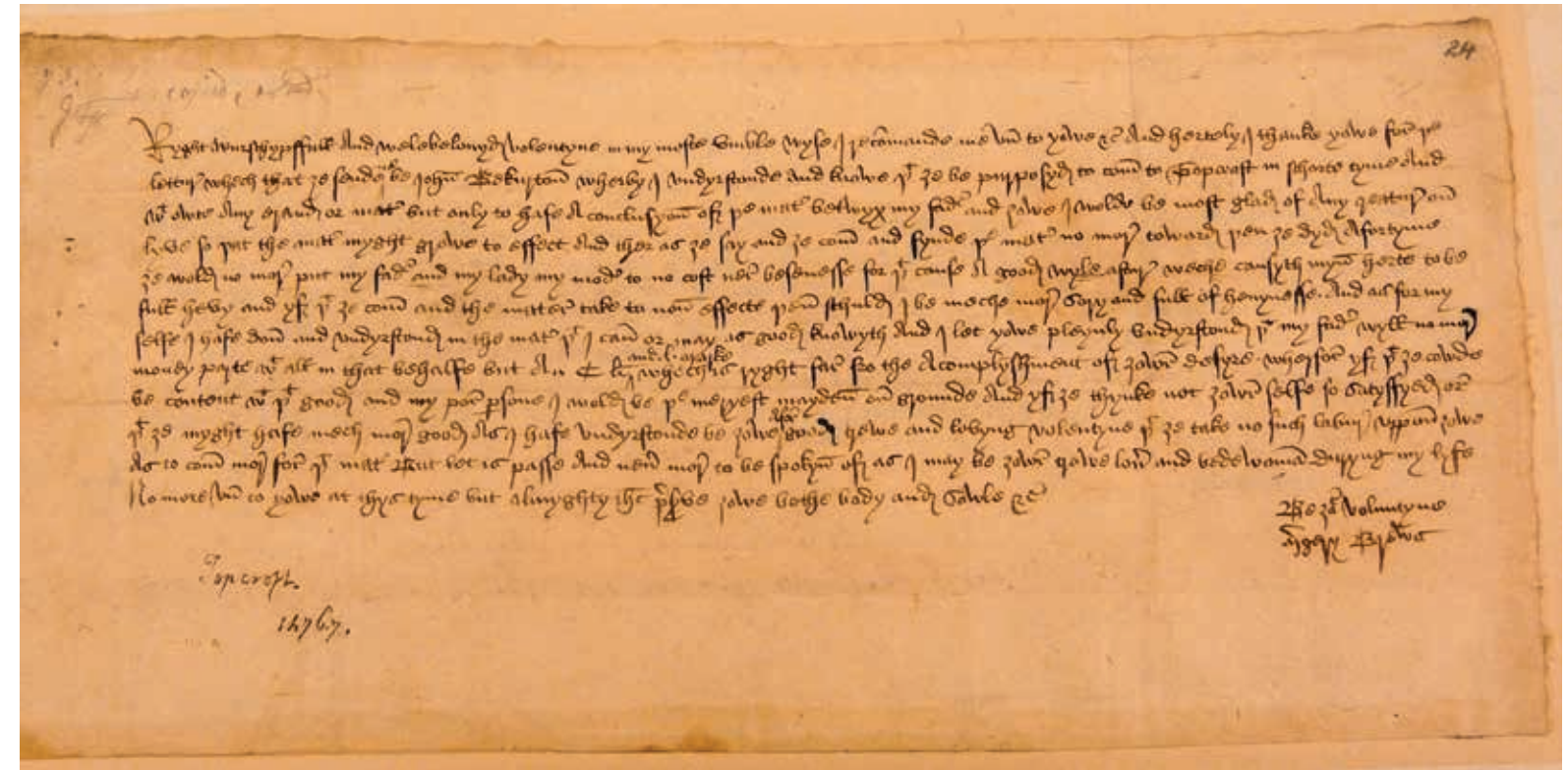
Second only to the festivities witnessed throughout the 12 days of Christmas, when excessive feasting, music, dancing, and games were the order of the day, Shrovetide was a time for ordinary people to indulge in food, drink, and raucous entertainments, watch plays, and play the popular—but dangerous—game of football.

St. Valentine's Day was once vastly overshadowed by Candlemas on Feb. 2.

Shrovetide also had a practical function. It legitimized the consumption of the last of the food stored over winter before it turned bad, allowing people to prepare mentally and physically for Lent at a time when there was traditionally a shortage of food. The carnival atmosphere also offered a release from the frustrations of winter. Taking its name from the act of shriving—or confessing—Shrovetide captures the very essence of how the medieval calendar absorbed, governed, and brought meaning to everyday life.

To Everything a Season

Of course, there were many other holy days, or holidays, providing occasions for celebration. Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost (which celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples after Christ's ascension) were the principal religious periods—balancing penitential fasting and solemnity with time away from work, mer-



ALL PHOTOS IN PUBLIC DOMAIN

(Left) How did a minor celebration of a saint become a major modern holiday? St. Valentine as depicted in this modern icon, at the Basilica di Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome. (Top right) The earliest known Valentine in English was from Margery Brews to John Paston. British Library. (Bottom right) By the Victorian era, Valentine's Day was a notable holiday, as this painting of a young lady with a love letter shows. “The Morning of St. Valentine,” 1865, John Callcott Horsley, Walker Art Gallery.



year remained consistent in England right up until the Reformation, when the observance of saints' days was abolished and events in the temporal cycle were modified. That some of the Catholic feasts, such as Valentine's Day, Shrove Tuesday, and Halloween (All Hallows' Eve), survived the Reformation to remain in our cultural calendar today is undoubtedly due to the rituals and traditions that secular folk attached to them, an issue that brings us full circle to St. Valentine.

Be My Valentine

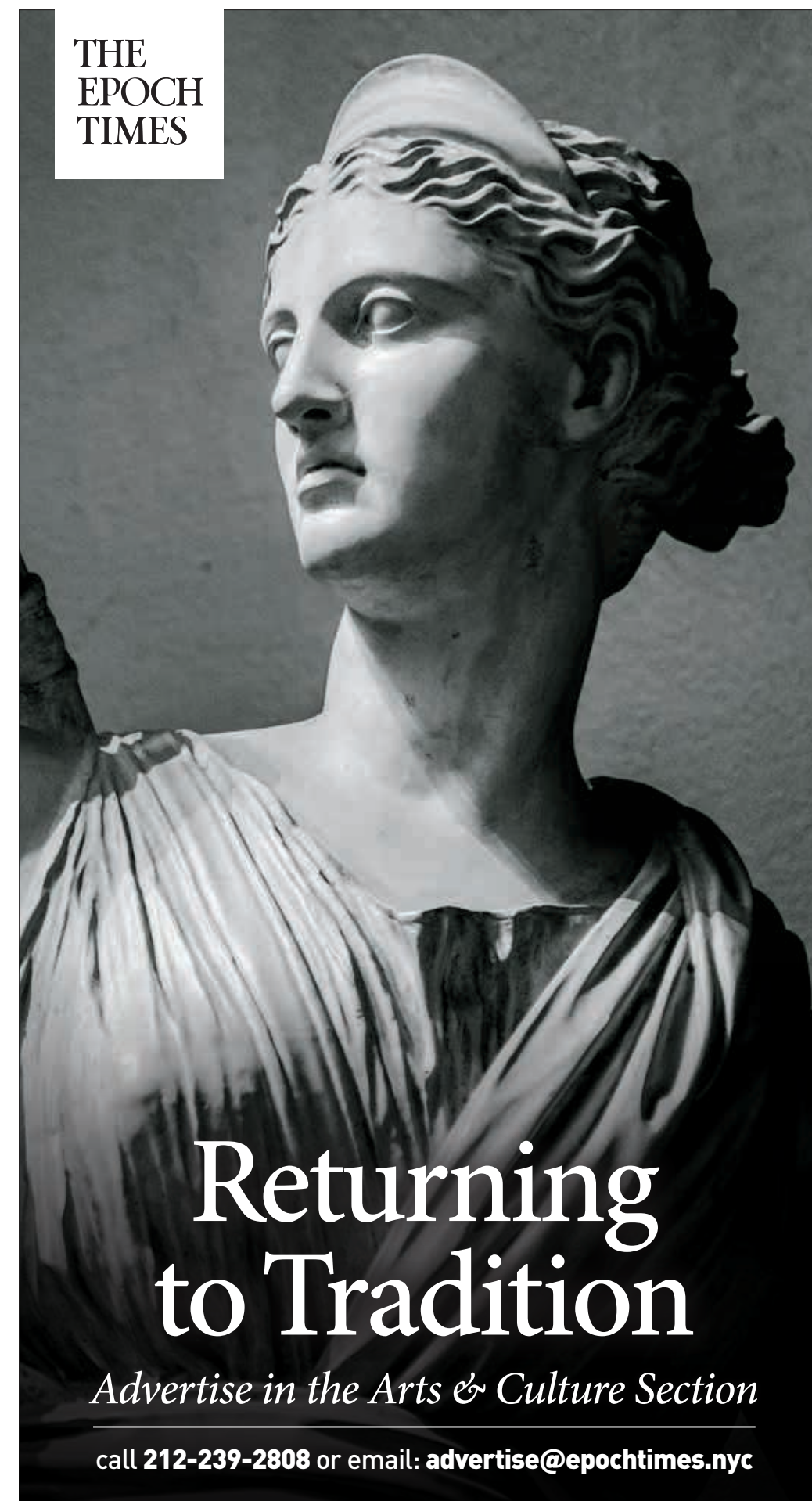
By the end of the Middle Ages, the meaning of Valentine's Day had expanded to incorporate human lovers expressing their feelings in hope of attracting or reaffirming a mate. In February 1477, one would-be lover, Margery Brews, sent the oldest-known “Valentine” in the English language to John Paston, referring to him as her “right welbelovyd Volutyn.”

At the time, Brews's parents were negotiating her marriage to Paston, a member of the Norfolk gentry, but he was not satisfied with the size of the dowry offered by her father.

The couple married shortly after, so Margery's heartfelt letters clearly appealed to her beloved. While we have to wait until the Tudor period to witness the now familiar concept of bestowing material gifts on one's Valentine, it is Margery's Valentine that best captures the essence of how the saint's day transformed from being a lesser-known feast on the medieval liturgical calendar to one of the most important days of the year for hopeful and hopeless romantics, regardless of religion.

Sarah Peverley is a professor of English at the University of Liverpool in England. This article was first published on *The Conversation*.

THE EPOCH TIMES



Returning to Tradition

Advertise in the Arts & Culture Section

call 212-239-2808 or email: advertise@epochtimes.nyc

American Values. Traditional Journalism.

“It's the only sane newspaper amidst all this insanity.”
Reader



ReadEpoch.com
(833) 693-7624

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

THE EPOCH TIMES
TRUTH AND TRADITION

Continued from page 6

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

To advertise, Call 212-239-2808
or email: advertise@epochtimes.nyc

FINE ARTS

‘Sketchbook Vol. 1’ EXHIBITION AT SUGARLIFT

Plus an interview with the founder of Sugarlift, an innovative art consultancy



COURTESY OF SUGARLIFT

Continued from Page 7

Pages from the sketchbook by Diana Corvelle, at Sugarlift in Long Island City, Queens, N.Y., on Jan. 19.

Continued from Page 6

The opening on Jan. 19 at Sugarlift drew a crowd of about 300 people. They waited in a casual line to enter a room that was only about 300 square feet, to leaf through the 14 sketchbooks. The content of the exhibition was beautifully hefty. Considering that the average number of pages in a sketchbook is about 100 (totaling about 1,400 pages of artwork to see), visitors lingered from the afternoon into the evening, fully engaged.

These sketchbooks do not just contain mere scribbles, but also masterful representations and illustrations of candid moments. Some seem to have been created deliberately as finished pieces, while others are very unreserved, with quick sketches and notes to self, such as “recipes for my paintings,” and “visions of red,” in Sarah Sager’s sketchbook, for example.

Given the personal nature of sketchbooks, some of the pages were clipped or covered to honor an artist’s privacy. “I started keeping a sketchbook many

years ago, and it wasn’t anything that was meant to be seen or even treated as an object of art,” Luis Colan said at the opening.

Colan drew thumbnail sketches of landscapes, which served as ideas for making monotypes at the monthly monotype printing parties at the Salmagundi Art Club on Fifth Avenue. “I could go into the Monotype Party and be able to work on them quickly because it was the only time that I had to use the press. Those three hours go by so fast,” he said.

When Joshua Henderson was invited to include one of his sketchbooks in the exhibition, he had completed only five silverpoint drawings, which he eventually included in a sketchbook that he bound himself.

“I just made the sketchbook the size of those drawings and then made more drawings,” Henderson said at the opening. Unlike most of the artists in the show, Henderson created his sketchbook knowing that it would be exhibited. “There are some images that tell the story of the sketchbook,” he added.

The sketchbook by David Morales Hernandez was

“

My sketchbooks are the most honest thing I do.

Artist Evan Kitson

dedicated exclusively to detailed pen-and-ink drawings of his travels in Japan. The sketchbook included tickets for public transportation and other kinds of receipts and brochures.

Evan Kitson’s sketchbook included a series of anatomical studies in graphite and red pencil, notes about his preparatory studies, and notes to himself, such as “I must draw for my life.” He works on any one of his 20 sketchbooks every day. “It’s this open space to play with different ideas or different passes of perception on setups I might want to take further,” Kitson said. “My sketchbooks are the most honest thing I do, and to be able to show them like

that [at Sugarlift] is really wonderful.”

Vi Luong’s sketchbook showed fine and straight lines in his incredibly detailed, 1,011 pen-and-ink architectural drawings. Videos on Instagram (@1011Drawings +mistry @mister.vi) reveal that he does not use a ruler to depict the buildings he loves to look at in New York, in Italy, and elsewhere.

“Sketchbook Vol. 1” is fascinating in how it draws you into long-contemplated experiences, which have been represented in a tactile object. And most of the artists in the show, all but one, have become immensely popular by sharing photos and time-lapse videos of their sketchbooks on Instagram, garnering 25,000 up to 350,000 followers.

While social media has increased the visibility of these artists’ work to a wider audience, fundamentally the appeal of such sketchbooks is their calling to engage your own perception directly with reality. And taking up a consistent drawing practice is one of the most simple and ready means of perceiving reality, as opposed to, for example, scrolling through Instagram.

“

The idea of Sugarlift has never changed, and that is to cultivate new collectors outside of the traditional collector market.

Wright Harvey,
founder of Sugarlift gallery

As an offshoot of the exhibition, Sugarlift worked in conjunction with Sotheby’s during the auction house’s Old Master Drawings sale. Four of the artists in “Sketchbook Vol. 1”—Dina Brodsky, Guno Park, Joshua Henderson, and Nicolas Sanchez—gave drawing lessons to visitors and potential buyers at Sotheby’s on Jan. 27. And almost all of the artists shared how they were inspired by particular old master drawings, which would soon go to auction, in a slide show on the Sotheby’s website.

Before the opening of “Sketchbook Vol. 1,” Sugarlift also created a giant sketchbook that it took to Union Square in New York and invited people to participate in a sketching competition with some of the artists in the show.

These are just a couple of examples of how Sugarlift is increasing its visibility, connecting emerging collectors with artists, nourishing a community of artists, and connecting this community with the general public.

None of the sketchbooks in the exhibition were for sale, but Sugarlift also displayed 14 framed and finished works, one by each of the artists, that were on sale.



PAUL-EMILE GENDRON/SUGARLIFT

A guest leafs through a sketchbook by Luis Colan.

A Conversation With the Founder of Sugarlift

THE EPOCH TIMES: How is Sugarlift different from a regular art gallery?
WRIGHT HARVEY: We have experimented with different models in person, online, experiential, art focused, client focused.

Those models have taken different forms, whether it was in Sugarlift’s former gallery in Bushwick, Brooklyn, or their new space in Long Island City, or at art fairs, or impromptu pop-up events, or their new, augmented, reality application designed to help clients visualize a potential work of art in their own spaces.

But the idea of Sugarlift has never changed, and that is to cultivate new collectors outside of the traditional collector market, and to allow more artists to be full-time and have sustainable careers. Technology has changed pretty much any business model across the board. The art market is still sort of clinging to the upper end of the market—auction houses and brick-and-mortar galleries. But at the same time, technology is really changing our market substantially.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What are some of those changes?

MR. HARVEY: As the art market goes online, artists can now communicate directly with their audience. Whereas in the past, the gallery, the dealer, or the auction house was doing the branding, the marketing, and making the sales for the artists. Now we have, for example, Nicholas Sanchez, who has a quarter of a million Instagram followers he communicates with daily. It changes the role of the galleries and at the same time opens up potential new people entering the market as collectors.

You can think of the accessibility of artists for the gallerists and collectors as a big cliché that everyone’s trying to figure out. But if you look at the bigger arc, from the time art was being collected

and commissioned by the church, by kings, pharaohs, and royalty, to wealthy merchants and barons in the 19th century, and then pre-2000, the only art collectors were people with old money. And since 2000, because of technology opening up the market, we have a mass affluent audience who are interested in art but are not quite connoisseurs. The art market hasn’t really built a service model around these new collectors.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Aren’t they going to the galleries?

MR. HARVEY: Most galleries have a small handful of collectors that drive their entire bottom line, and that’s why it feels so exclusive, and we’re trying to say, let’s change the entire model. Let’s open up art to a much wider audience. Art is still a luxury good, but there are arguably millions of people who are interested in collecting a painting who don’t have access to it or at least don’t know where to start. And there are thousands of artists creating art. They don’t have access to the collector, so that’s what we’re bridging.

The number of galleries that are closing is actually accelerating every year, partially because of rent increasing. Galleries are saying, OK, maybe now we need to go to art fairs or sell things on Instagram, but they’re sort of trying to grasp what the next model is.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Where does that leave the role of the tastemaker and connoisseur? Is that the role of Sugarlift?

MR. HARVEY: That’s not necessarily true. A traditional gallery might work with only 10 artists, where they’re trying to develop the myths and brands behind these artists to really increase their financial value and create a sort of speculative value around those artists.

Some of those collectors don’t even understand what they are buying, but they’re buying because the galleries tell them that they’re going to be worth more in the future. I fundamentally am opposed to that idea, and I think it misses the whole point of the visual arts in general. For me personally, I have been an artist, and I enjoy looking at art and thinking about art, and none of that has to do with the financial value. It has to do with understanding the artists behind it, the context of how they fit into art history and general cultural history. It has to do with understanding the materials and the techniques. It has to do with understanding the ideas that they’re expressing, and how they’re responding to other artists who came before them. And if you think about it, none of that has to do with the dollar amount on a piece.

I believe that a new art collector, even if they have yet to buy their first piece, knows what they want to collect. They know what they react to, connect to, emotionally. It’s our job to understand that for a new collector, there might be certain pitfalls that they need to avoid, such as not paying the right price for a piece, not understanding the medium of a piece, not understanding that some work might be more derivative.

or kind of kitsch. We help them determine the difference between a bad artist and a good artist who’s creating interesting and strong work. So to combine those ideas, it’s our job to keep the collector in the driver’s seat as the tastemaker, but to only present them with good options.

THE EPOCH TIMES: So you’re empowering the collector, and empowering the artist by connecting them?

MR. HARVEY: We’re trying to basically reduce the barriers between the artist and the collector, and part of that is the discovery of the artists and the artwork, but it’s also envisioning how that art would fit in the lives of the collectors, but using technology to look at a lot of options to visualize it in their space. For example, we have an augmented reality application that clients can use to envision what a particular work of art would look like in their homes.

Also, our business has a really strong, client service and logistics aspect. So when clients find something they love, we make it really easy on the artists and the collectors to bring that art into their lives.

THE EPOCH TIMES: You also have a very wide variety of artists in terms of their style and approach. How do you find and select the artists?

MR. HARVEY: The main thing I look for is—in whichever medium the artist is working—a mastery.

of that medium or technique. So for example, Dina Brodsky’s work, whether you’re looking at her ballpoint pen drawings or her miniature paintings, she really stands out from a technical standpoint. Or if we’re working with a photographer, we evaluate them in terms of their skill level relative to the population of other photographers out there. So we’re really looking for artists who know their medium inside and out. Sometimes, it means they have had classical training, sometimes it means they have put in the time, but they do set themselves apart.

The second thing we look for is, do the artists have a strong understanding of how their work relates to other artists and also to art history? And do they understand that what they’re creating has to relate to everything else that came before it and around it. Art is always responding to what else has been created, and I think with that strong understanding, you can make better work.

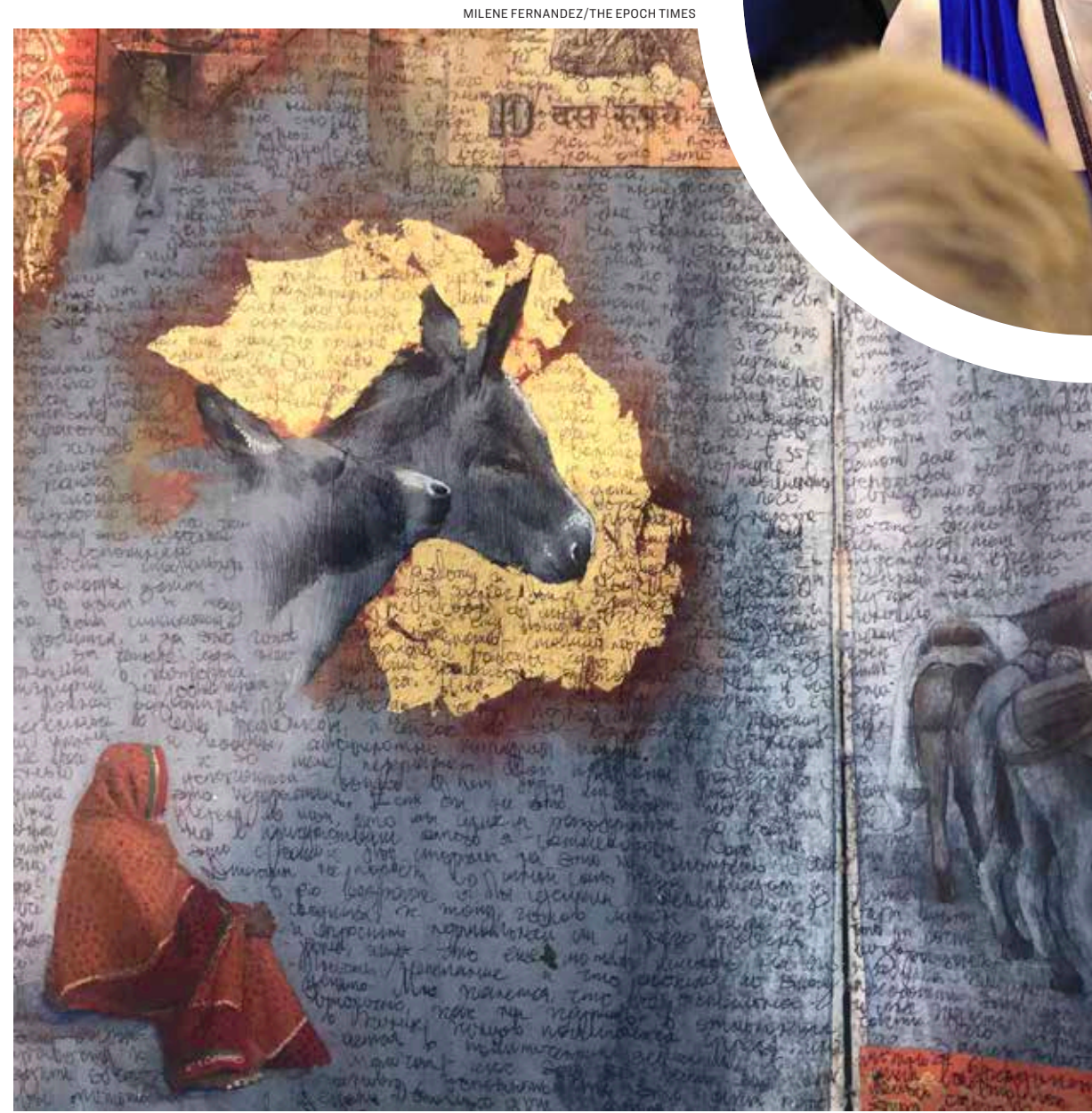
We’re not trying to work with every single artist in the world. We’re really trying to cultivate a community of artists who we think are making new and interesting work. We work with artists who we think are good people, that we want to be a part of that community. That means, they want to be full-time artists. They work hard, they’re honest, and they treat the other artists that we work with with respect, and that by bringing them into the community, it makes everyone better. It makes everyone stronger.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What inspired you to establish Sugarlift?

MR. HARVEY: Wanting to spend more of my professional life doing something that I genuinely care about and where I could make a difference. And working in the visual arts is very energizing for me. I knew that I cared enough and that I would have the stamina to do something impactful.

We want to create more sustainable careers for artists so that in the long run, they can continue to evolve their practice over many years, like many of the great artists before us. Those masters had a whole lifetime to continue to evolve and progress, and those are the artists that we celebrate as culturally significant to us as human beings and whose works hang in institutions.

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.



MILENE FERNANDEZ/THE EPOCH TIMES

Detail of a Dina Brodsky sketchbook pages.



A sketchbook page by Nicolas V. Sanchez.

MILENE FERNANDEZ THE EPOCH TIMES



MILENE FERNANDEZ/THE EPOCH TIMES

A sketchbook page by Vi Luong.

ESSENCE OF CHINA



ANCIENT CHINESE STORIES

Chinese New Year's 'Human Day' Celebrates 'Birthday' of Humankind

CINDY CHAN

Birthdays are special occasions that hold a great deal of meaning for many people. Often a time of celebration, a birthday also offers a chance for renewal and reinvigoration as we aspire to greater things and look forward to a bright year ahead. It also represents an opportunity to reflect and have our gratitude grow for the joys and blessings in our lives.

For the ancient Chinese people, this annual occasion occurred not only on the anniversary of their birth but also on another special day known as "renri," which falls on the seventh day of the Chinese New Year.

Literally "Human Day," renri is the day on which it is said that the goddess Nu Wa created human beings. Also called the Day of Humankind, renri is regarded in ancient Chinese tradition as the common "birthday" of all humans.

The Day of Humankind, 'renri' is regarded in ancient Chinese tradition as the common 'birthday' of all humans.

The custom of celebrating renri dates back to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220). The 2019 Chinese New Year fell on Feb. 5, thus placing renri on Feb. 11.

According to one version of the ancient legend, Nu Wa came to the world many thousands of years after the god Pan Gu created the world.

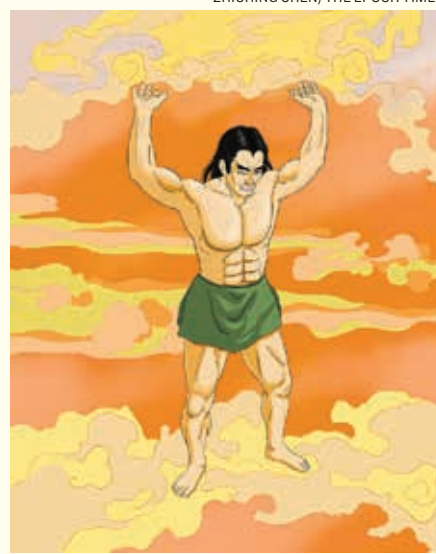
Pan Gu had himself worked tirelessly for many thousands of years, standing between the sky and the Earth and pushing them far-



SM YANG/THE EPOCH TIMES

▲ The goddess Nu Wa created human beings. She also imparted wisdom to them and paved the way for them to develop human culture.

▶ The god Pang Gu holds up the sky, firmly separating it from the earth. When he died, he dedicated his entire body to the world's future beings.



ZHICHING CHEN/THE EPOCH TIMES

ther and farther apart as his body grew larger and larger. After the separation of sky and Earth became stable, Pan Gu fell down exhausted. He went to sleep and never awoke.

When he died, he dedicated his entire body to the world's future beings. For example, his head transformed into moun-

tains, his eyes formed the sun and moon, his hair turned into plants and trees, and his blood became the oceans.

Creation of Human Beings

Then Nu Wa appeared, and it is believed that she first made six animals and then created human beings.

From the first to the sixth day of the Chinese New Year, she created the chicken, dog, boar, sheep, cow, and horse.

Then on Day 7, Nu Wa sat by the edge of a pond and, looking at her own reflection, began to mix clay with water to create small figures in her own image, both males and females.

She blew her breath upon the figures before placing them on the ground, thus giving them souls, and was delighted when they became alive.

Every day, Nu Wa made more human beings and cherished them. She imparted wisdom to them and created musical instruments so that they could make music and express themselves through dance and song.

This paved the way for human culture to develop, whereby people were able to properly govern themselves and continue to improve their lives.

To ensure that humans lived on after the elderly died from old age, Nu Wa established the system of marriage so that men and women could live together and start families. In this way, human beings were able to sustain their own existence generation after generation.

The number of lives went on to become countless. Each has its own story, much like the lives unfolding in a vivid cherished novel.

So renri is not only a festival for wishing a happy birthday to all of humankind, but it is also a time to commemorate Nu Wa with a deep sense of gratitude.

Human Day is also a reminder for human beings to live by upright principles as good people, and to treasure their relationships and other lives, so as to honor their creator and indeed humankind's own creation.



NO COMMUNISM, NO SOCIALISM JUST PURE TRADITIONAL JOURNALISM

Dear Reader,

This newspaper is for you to enjoy. In an age of media bias, we work to bring you independent news coverage.

When reporting on the Presidency, most news outlets are openly biased. **We report on the President and the Administration truthfully.** For China coverage, our unique network of insiders helps us tell behind-the-scenes stories that can't be found anywhere else.

On social issues, we expose the destructive history of communism and its continued effects on today's society. For arts and lifestyle, **we focus on classical culture and traditional values.**

At The Epoch Times, we believe the media has a responsibility to uphold a moral society.

Subscribe today. Get the independent news you won't find anywhere else, and **get the insights only The Epoch Times can provide**, delivered to your doorstep every week.



THE EPOCH TIMES

\$1 — First month trial*

Two options after first month trial, please choose:

▶ **\$39** (\$3/wk) — 3 months ~~\$57~~

▶ **\$139** (\$2.66/wk) — 12 months ~~\$228~~

Every week: 1 paper + 5 digital papers (Mon-Fri)

PAYMENT METHOD CREDIT CARD/ DEBIT CARD:

VISA MC AMEX DISC

CHECK \$ _____ # _____

MAIL TO: ▼

229 W. 28th Street, FL. 7, NY NY 10001

* New customers only. After the first month, your subscription of choice will take affect. Cancel anytime for any reason, at **833-693-7624**.

DELIVER TO:

PLEASE PRINT (All fields are required)

NAME _____ PHONE (____) _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ EMAIL _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ CVC Nr. _____

Name on Card _____ Authorization Signature _____

100% satisfaction guaranteed promise

This is a continuous membership that may be cancelled at any time. **To cancel or make changes to your subscription, please call 833-693-7624.** Credit cards will be enrolled in automatic payments. **Your subscription will automatically renew unless you cancel.** Cancel anytime, for any reason.

DELIVERY NOTES

USE OF THIRD PARTIES, PRIVACY AND USE OF DATA

We may use third parties to assist in the provision and fulfillment of any part of the subscription service on our behalf. We may pass your personal information provided by you to such third parties but only for the purposes of providing the subscription delivery service to you. Your personal billing information will be dealt with in accordance with our privacy policy.

SUBSCRIBE NOW AND GET THE REAL NEWS!

➔ ReadEpoch.com (833-693-7624)

FOR MORE OPTIONS VISIT:

ReadEpoch.com

- Unlimited access on desktop, tablet, and mobile
- Weekly home delivery
- Cancel anytime, for any reason.