



## POPCORN™ The Golden Bowl Brimming With Cultured Pearls

By Michael S. Goldberger

One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent

3 & 1/2 popcorns

*The Golden Bowl*, a splendidly complex yet delightfully accessible adaptation of Henry James's novel about an Italian prince who weds the daughter of America's first billionaire instead of his less-than-rich lover, is just what the doctor ordered — for your cultural health, that is.

Directed by James Ivory, the turn-of-the-century tale of romantic intrigue promises to deliver philosophical meditations, high-minded ideals and thespic excellence to your entertainment diet. Gosh knows, even the most cautious of big screen consumers imbibe far too much junk cinema.

Hence, consider Ruth Praver Jhabvala's gloriously sophisticated screenplay the motion picture equivalent of an anti-oxidant. Just one viewing of producer Ismail Merchant's wonderfully costumed, beautifully filmed period piece is guaranteed to cancel out the ill effects of six car chases, five wanton murders, and four moronic plots.

However, while folks suffering from unusually high levels of gratuitous film violence may have to enjoy *The Golden Bowl* twice, medical researchers are still not sure if any number of viewings can help moviegoers who have seen *Freddy Got Fingered* (2001). Even modern science has its limits. Happily, the film is as entertaining as it is healthful.

Heading a superb cast is Nick Nolte as industrialist Adam Verver, a study in control, power and autocratic benevolence. A widower, the tycoon has been amassing art treasures to one day occupy a museum he is building back in American City. It's the emblematic coal-mining town where he amassed his fortune, and the richest man in America would like to give something back.

But, he holds no interest above the happiness of his only child, Maggie, portrayed with elegant innocence by Kate Beckinsale. Thus, he is understandably delighted when dear daughter finds the love of her life in Prince Amerigo.

Jeremy Northam is excellent as the Prince, embodying that rare, seemingly ambiguous combination of romantic and pragmatist that Europeans do so well.

Replete with castle but no funds to restore it, he represents just the sort of pauper aristocracy that royalty-starved Americans have swooned over for years. An ominous family history dating back to Medieval days includes a legend about an indiscreet wife and her treacherous step-son beheaded for their infidelity. And, no lie, Amerigo is actually a direct descendant of the fellow for whom they named America.

But presently more important, the Prince understands the moral and social ramifications that his nuptial represents. We even get the feeling he sometimes mistakes for love his tacitly understood gratitude to Maggie. In short, he lives up to his end of the bargain — for a while. Which brings us to the matter of Charlotte, exquisitely realized by Uma Thurman.

It gets a little complicated, how all these folks doing the social scene in and around London, circa 1905, know each other. But what's hidden from our winsome bride by matchmaker and fellow American, Fanny Assingham, cleverly expressed by Anjelica Huston, is that the Prince and Maggie's pal Charlotte were previously, well, er, acquainted. But if you suspect a romantic triangle, rest assured it doesn't stay one for very long. Henry James adds a fourth side.

James, often credited with being the first to incorporate modern psychological theory into literature, thickens the brew by having the contem-

plative robber baron marry the marked woman. Not that the billionaire knows she's that. Or does he?

After all, Adam Verver didn't get rich by not being able to read situations. And if he does know, what is his motivation? For that matter, what does *The Golden Bowl* say about the development of a new and emerging American aristocracy based on industrial wealth? Is James using the Prince as an example of the withering European social classes and Verver as a symbol of capital triumphing over genealogy? What is the author saying about the fate of marriage in the post-Victorian era? Write a 400-word essay and explain. Be sure to make parallels and give cogent examples.

Just kidding. Relax. But you get the idea.

In summation, not only does *The Golden Bowl* prove salubrious via the stimulating exercise your gray matter receives. But without having to fear a dreaded test, you also get all the intellectual joy of that inspiring English class you once had, when you were actually encouraged to contemplate ideals instead of the humdrum and practical. Your energized brain ecstatically fires on all four lobes and ebulliently exclaims, "No *Terminator* 2 tonight, Mr. Schwarzenegger. Nope. No *Rambo* this evening, Mr. Stallone." Now, if only we could talk your health plan into covering the theater admission.

*The Golden Bowl*, rated R, is a Miramax release directed by James Ivory and stars Uma Thurman, Nick Nolte, and Jeremy Northam. Running time: 128 minutes.

## NJSO Concert

CONTINUED FROM PG 22

accurate and became more engaging but was almost driven by the primary fire of the orchestra, who absolutely excelled in musical performance here.

The concert took off again after intermission with the great German powerhouse — Beethoven 7. Mr. Macal had his job cut out for him, programming the same piece in the wake of George Marinier Maull's Beethoven 7th of the previous week in the same venue.

While Mr. Macal failed to live up to Mr. Maull and his memorable offering with the Philharmonic Orchestra of New Jersey, the NJSO members presented a wonderful effort.

The opening chords of the first movement were strong, aggressive and clear. Highlights included a most excellent dynamic control from the orchestra, and a superior bass sound, both of which the Philharmonic Orchestra lacked.

At someone's suggestion, the NJSO has finally closed all of the gaps behind the orchestra by packing the "acoustic cabinets" directly against each other, helping to enhance lower end sound.

Several musical crashes, one from end chair horn and one from two converging clarinets, ripped clearly through the musical fabric. "Wrong notes are of little consequence, but to play without passion is inexcusable," said Beethoven.

The second movement Allegretto which can be emotionally devastating, features a series of heartbeat rhythm's in variation in the opening measures. This movement was so well loved at its premier that it was immediately encored. In fact, it was also used to replace the brief slow movement of the 8th Symphony several times during Beethoven's lifetime. This is where Mr. Macal started to take a distant second to Mr. Maull.

The Czech Macal handled the intimacy of this section with typical musical coarseness he affords much of the German repertoire. He has stated that he will probably "never set foot in Germany" — (for dubious reasons no doubt). His comparative breakneck speed killed the ambience. What is he thinking?

While the third and fourth movements featured excellent playing and control from the orchestra, the annoying body language of Macal was also highlighted. Macal's arm gestures are vague - confusing section attacks, and his head does not seem to move at the neck, favoring the turning of his entire body towards varying sections of the orchestra.

The NJSO has potential beyond imagination, but because of this vague conducting style, misinterpretation and lack of direction, the orchestra cannot truly excel.

Leadership is everything. A hero will be needed to take the orchestra beyond their limits. If the NJSO is smart, they will choose talent over a name.

## Sabrina Fair

CONTINUED FROM PG 22

this production could be brilliant. The set design, as always at WCP, was fabulous. I applaud Vern Keller and Bill McMeekan for designing and constructing the exquisite scenery.

*Sabrina Fair* will continue its run at WCP through Saturday, June 9.



Cheri Rogowsky for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
THE GANG'S ALL HERE...Students of Mary Lu Farrell at Terrill Middle School in Scotch Plains offered their Spring Concert on Tuesday, May 15. Performances, such as the one depicted above, were given by members of the Glee Club, Choir and Choruses of the school.

Interested in reviewing restaurants in the area and writing about the experience? Please e-mail michelle@goleader.com

## Ingredients for Season Finales

CONTINUED FROM PG 22

she snaps out of it, she musters up the strength to save her sis. Before leaving for her new channel, UPN-9, Buffy plunges herself into the abyss of the end of the world in order to save it. She dies and we

watch next season? Gulp...yes.

Finally, "Providence" writers took the death approach by killing/not killing off the patriarch of the Hanson family. Who doesn't love Dr. Hanson — the town veteri-



Is Rachel "carrying" a secret?



Will Syd carry on with married politician Joe Connelly?

are left with a still shot of her headstone. The catastrophic death of one of my favorite heroines guarantees that I am ready to dig my fangs (that's vampire-speak) into next season. Like, for sure, we know we haven't seen the last of her.

When President Bartlett's secretary and lifelong friend Mrs. Landingham is killed in a car accident (more death), the prez goes into his own kind of catatonic state, flashing back to his childhood when he first met Mrs. L. Caught somewhere between grief and shock, he has the doors of the cathedral sealed off after her funeral and goes into an over-the-top temper tantrum that would rivet Satan. "You're a feckless thug!" he screams, strutting up to the front of the church before putting out a newly-lit cigarette on the cathedral's marble floor. Will he or won't he run for a second term? Will Bartlett lose the toddler behavior when facing the Press Corp? I predict an overwhelming "yes" to all questions. But, Schlamme and Sorkin stretched the drama envelope with the church scene, and how long do we need to stare at Bartlett's rain-soaked face before we start rolling the credits?

"Friends" writers took a different path with their season finale — who's pregnant? Years ago, this approach was as hackneyed as a Madonna song on the radio. It's fresher now, somehow. When Rachel and Phoebe find a positive pregnancy test in Monica's wastebasket, they think, "Baby shower? We haven't even gotten through the wedding yet!" When Monica reveals that she isn't expecting, the freeze frame and uncomfortable look on Rachel's face gives away the identity of the true mama. There's no real cliffhanger here, but it's refreshing to see the death/flashback play passed up here.

One of the only programs on television with any hint of family values is "7th Heaven." The writers took a big risk with their finale, introducing the topic of "adult relations" into the script and watching the family go topsyturvy. The entire situation was almost comical and slapstick at times. Have I taken the bait to



## As I Was Saying...

A column by freelancers from the A&E section of The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood. Written whenever the muse hits them.

## 'Star Trek Voyager' Ends And So Does My Life

By CAROL F. DAVIS  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

If you tried to reach me and I did not pick up the telephone on a particular Wednesday evening a few weeks back, it was because I was

having an emotional moment and I just needed some time alone.

Neelix, you see, left the crew of "Voyager." Even though Neelix had never been my favorite crew member, with his departure, out came the box of tissues. It was during this, the penultimate episode before the series finale, that it struck me: the ending of this seven-year "Star Trek" series would leave a huge void in my life, both because of the one-hour I faithfully devoted to it each Wednesday. Yes, even to the exclusion of picking up the telephone when I clearly could hear my mother speaking into the answering machine wanting to know what I had for dinner that night, and because I had become involved in a relationship with the crew. Especially Chakotay. But never mind about that part.

I have watched "Star Trek" since the days of Captain Kirk and Spock, and I can easily say that "Voyager," the fourth series, is my favorite. Perhaps one reason is because this show truly empowered women, showing them in leadership roles making tough calls and decisions that effected lots of lives.

Janeway was a great Captain, and her female crew members were just as powerful. Feminism aside, "Voyager" gave us some superb futuristic technology and highlighted some fascinating alien races in the Delta Quadrant.

I especially liked the episodes in which Janeway and her crew didn't always stick to their Prime Directive of non-interference.

And then there's the Borg, the terrorist aliens who deserve a category of their own. The Borg Queen is my ideal female — cool, bald, beautiful,

and a woman who uses her words wisely. The fact that her torso needs to be attached to her head, and that she is mostly mechanical, is just an added bonus. I think I will be the Borg Queen for Halloween this year.



The voyage has ended, but will Carol survive?

The concept of Starfleet working in unison with the handsome, spiritual, (did I mention handsome?) Chakotay and his crew of Maquis worked well in this series. If you forget how they were thrown together, try to catch a rerun of "Caretaker," the two-part episode that premiered on January 16, 1995, and started it all. It has been the nearly perfect seven-year journey through the Delta Quadrant.

I don't know about you, but I am looking forward, although skeptically, to the fifth series, "Enterprise," and to the new Captain Bakula.

Some of my friends were glad to see "Voyager" end. They think I need a break. I disagree. It is — and this is for real, guys — the only program I've watched on television with regularity since the demise of "Twin Peaks" in the early 90s. Heck, I never even had cable service until my husband insisted on having it installed several months ago.

Oh, and don't start calling me on Wednesday nights all of a sudden. I've come to enjoy my hour of isolation from you, uh, I mean it all.

## Piano Recitals Planned At Paul Nazzaro Studio

**WESTFIELD** — The Paul Nazzaro Music Studio in Westfield will present its Annual Spring Recitals for piano students from Thursday, May 31, to Tuesday, June 5.

On May 31, the performers will include: Marc Brody, Jack Fraser, Clair Chin, Peter Wanfried, Jeffrey Brody, Jessica Natoli, Laura Romanowski, Allison Acevedo, Derek Wanfried, George Williamson, Crista Ricci, Kylie Fraser, Danielle Ferrari, Josh Fishman, Mark Raimondi, Michelle Morganoff, Matt Carville and Michael Yee.

Performing on Friday, June 1, will be: Ryan Jennings, Jacob Lang, Connor Jennings, Seton Hartnett, Jacob Lavenhar, Eamon Hartnett, Andrew Calvaruso, Mallory Boesch, Neil Pratt, Matt Liebowitz, Ben Chewey, Laura Schwab, Matt Harris, Jackie Nicoll, Hillary Nicoll, John Boyd and Eric Pratt.

On Monday, June 4, the musicians spotlighted will include: *Yahiza Jaramillo, Lynn Babich, Daphney Noel, Annie McGee, Dan Berman, Nick Shorrock, Kaitlin Kominsky, Kate McGee, Melanie Kaufhold*, adult students *Lisa Sharkey, Yvonne Fu, Don McGee, Trisha Wheeler, Karen Vowels, Maureen Aylward, Bonnie Feldman and Mary Kominsky.*

On June 5, the performing students will be: *Mary Muldoon, Julia Wasilewski, Emily Doskow, Julian Seltzer, Emily O'Brien, Lisa Nehring, Steve Marino, John Thomas Colucci, Alex Colucci, Harry Marino, Patrick McGowan, Patrick Muldoon, Ed Kerins, Max Kaplan, Cecilia Della Peruti, Helen Kaplan, Allison Cascone and Laura Yee.*

For more information, please call (908) 232-3310 or visit [www.NazzaroMusic.com](http://www.NazzaroMusic.com).

## The Faculty of the Carolyn Klinger-Kueter Music Studio . . .

Wishes the very best to their students on their upcoming recital  
Summer • Fall  
Registration Now in Progress



Carolyn Klinger-Kueter

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