



My Take on It

With Kerrianne Spellman Cort

Classics: Why Some Things Are Better Unaltered

By KERRIANNE SPELLMAN CORT
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

FANWOOD — This past Friday, Oddsocks Productions, a London-based theatrical company, told the public that their upcoming production of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* will now be entitled *The Bell-Ringer of Notre Dame*.



Hunchback or just a bell-ringer?

Not wanting to offend people with scoliosis, a condition that causes curvature of the spine, Oddsocks producer Elli Mackenzie made the decision to change the title after speaking with a disability advisor. Mackenzie said that the company did not want to reinforce any stereotypes about Quasimodos's disability.

Quasimodo, as most people know, is the main character in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, a novel written by Victor Hugo that was first published in France in 1831. The novel was later translated into English and a film version was made in 1923, starring Lon Chaney.

Most recently, Disney took its turn putting a spin on the old classic with their extremely successful 1996 animated version.

The character is a hunchback who rings the bell of the famous Parisian Cathedral. Quasimodo is also deaf, and the story, of course, teaches the lesson that disabilities do not diminish a person's worth.

London's Scoliosis Association released a statement saying they were thrilled with the decision to change the title as people have been derogatory and rude to their members in the past, poking fun and calling names at people with spinal disabilities.

But what would Hugo think? It's true that titles of books are changed often, and the author rarely has much say when their work is translated into a film or play. The words "based on the novel

by" frequently follow the new and improved title of a piece, and, admittedly, sometimes the change is necessary.

Obviously, Hugo is no longer with us, but, like *Les Miserables*, another brilliant work of his, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is a classic. Should the title of one of the greatest stories of all time be changed just to appease a few people who might take offense?

The story still teaches that people should never be judged by their appearance, so the novel, film and play versions are still completely on the side of the disabled.

I can think of many titles of novels that have the potential to offend. Yet, changing them seems to be counterproductive to the author's intent. Would *Snow White and the Seven Cute Tiny Guys* have the same impact? I don't think so. Classics become classics for a reason.

I do applaud people who take risks, so if Oddsocks Productions feel that they have made the correct decision, good for them. Still, I believe some things are better left alone.

South Pacific and Dames at Sea On Tap With WYACT Group

WESTFIELD — For the 11th consecutive summer, talented youth from New Jersey will participate in the Westfield Young Artists Cooperative Theatre's (WYACT) summer productions.

This season, in partnership with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark and the Algonquin Arts Theater (AAT) in Manasquan, WYACT has drawn actors/actresses representing over 30 towns and 10 counties in New Jersey to present *South Pacific* and *Dames at Sea*.

The young actors and actresses speak highly of WYACT's Artistic Director Cynthia Meryl.

"I am so excited to be part of both productions this season. Cindy has cast me in challenging roles and this summer will be a great opportunity for personal and professional growth, which WYACT has always encouraged," stated Lauren Lindner, 17, of Summit.

South Pacific will be Lindner's fourth show with WYACT, while *Dames at Sea* will be the fifth production in which she participates.

South Pacific, the romantic Rodgers and Hammerstein classic, will run at NJPAC from Friday, July 12 to Sunday, July 21, before touring to AAT from Friday, July 26 through Sunday, August 4. *Dames at Sea*, the tap dance spoof, will run at AAT from Wednesday, August 14 through Sunday, August 18.

For general WYACT information, please call (908) 233-3221. For tickets and box office information at NJPAC, please call (888) GO-NJPAC or AAT at (732) 528-9211.

Bonus Pen & Ink

With Michelle H. Le Poidevin

When God Gets Booted Out of A Solemn Pledge, We Must Unite

By MICHELLE H. LE POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Stepping into the world of an atheist like Michael Newdow for a second, here's what I see: a blinding fog of personal vagueness, an undefined reality, a responsibility only to oneself, and an ignorance toward anyone else's right to believe in a higher power — or God, if you will allow me to mention His name for a couple of minutes.

If God doesn't "Bless America" in our national anthems, who's doing it? In Newdow's world the lyrics should be changed to something like: "Newdow Blesses America, Land That He Loves."

We should also do a little erasing to The Mayflower Compact, where God is mentioned four times, and The Declaration of Independence, where God is mentioned in one of the first paragraphs. All of the holiday or Christmas songs that are piped through the department stores should also be scoured for any references to God or Christ's birth. Perhaps, playing the songs backwards for any lyrics that might be offensive to Newdow's anti-God beliefs might also be in order. Last week, when the Ninth



Ingrid McKinley for The Leader/The Times
HANDS, HEARTS...Could you convince this veteran patriot or any of his friends to drop "God" from the Pledge of Allegiance during Memorial Day celebrations.



SIGN OF THE TIMES...This year's Memorial Day Parade in Westfield included one small patriot who had no problem hoping that God would bless his nation, as reflected by his poster.

Circuit Court of Appeals sided with Newdow, a Sacramento, Calif. dad who didn't want his daughter subjected to the nasty "God" word during the school time's recitation of "The Pledge of Allegiance," a terrible disservice was done to a wounded nation needing patriotism and having NO problem with the

name of God being mentioned thus far. Newdow may think he's protecting his rights, but he is usurping the rights of the vast majority of Americans who have been horrified by the concept of erasing the word from the traditional oath which they have cherished.

Does Newdow have a problem accepting the dollars he's gotten from his media appearances which clearly state "In God We Trust?" We certainly doubt it goes that far. When Newdow has to lay his hand on The Bible to testify in court, does his hand fry, become electrocuted, does lightning strike him or does God (that guy in the sky who doesn't exist in his world) strike him dead? Obviously not. But, God forbid (oops, there I go again), he has to pledge to the judge that he will "tell the truth, so help him God?" will he be held in contempt of court for not using the "G" word? I perish to think of what would happen to our hapless friend.

The best thing I can do for Newdow, whether he wants it or not, is to pray for him.

2002-2003 Season Schedule Told By Westfield Symphony Orchestra

WESTFIELD — "Destination Romance!" will be the theme of the 2002-2003 season for the Westfield Symphony Orchestra (WSO), as the resident orchestra of Union County fetes its 20th anniversary.

On Saturday, October 5, at the Union County Arts Center (UCAC) in Rahway, during the first concert of the season, "To Russia With Love," the ensemble, led by Music Director and Conductor David Wroe, will present Scarmolin's *Nights*, Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* with soloist Dickran Atamian, and Rachmaninov's *Symphony No. 2*.



Maestro David Wroe

"Destination Hollywood!" on Saturday, November 16, the Presbyterian Church in Westfield will be filled with the sounds of Gershwin's *American in Paris*, Korngold's *Violin Concerto* with soloist Vadim Gluzman, and Dvorak's *New World Symphony*.

New Year's Eve in Westfield will be

a special time for music lovers when the WSO joins the Westfield Young Artists' Cooperative Theatre (WYACT) for a concert at the Presbyterian Church.

After the holiday season, the WSO will return to the Presbyterian Church for "Alpine Peaks," on Saturday, February 1, 2003 when musicians will perform Strauss' *Metamorphosen*, Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* and Mendelssohn's *Symphony No. 3, Scottish*.

"The Gypsy Spirit" will bring the WSO back to the UCAC when Chen Yi's *Ge Xu*, Dvorak's *Cello Concerto* with soloist Wendy Warner and Brahms' *Symphony No. 2* performed on Saturday, March 22, 2003.

Puccini's *Turandot* will end the WSO season with "Passion, Oriental Style" at the Presbyterian Church on Saturday, May 17.

For ticket information, please call the WSO Office at (908) 232-9400 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. or the UCAC Box Office at (732) 499-8226.

Summer Auditions Now Underway For New Youth Philharmonic Group

SCOTCH PLAINS — Tri-state area orchestra conductor Ira Kraemer has announced the formation of the Young Players Philharmonic, Inc., a youth orchestra for intermediate and advanced young musicians in New Jersey.

Applications are currently being accepted for the season, beginning in September, for players in all orchestral positions: intermediate to advanced violins, viola, cello, bass, woodwinds, brass and percussion. Auditions are being scheduled and will be held throughout June and July.

The organization is an outgrowth of a successful summer season of the 2001 Summer Youth Ensemble Festival in Clark, which attracted musicians from Essex, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Somerset and

Union counties. A non-profit cultural arts organization, the group's mission is to provide classical orchestral instruction and a greater depth of musical understanding to young area residents.

The Young Players Philharmonic's home for rehearsal and performance will be Arthur L. Johnson High School on Westfield Avenue in Clark.

Rehearsals will be held weekly on Wednesdays, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Solo performance opportunities will be available to qualified orchestra members.

For more information, to obtain an application or to schedule an audition, please call Orchestra Manager Karen Hedinger at (732) 499-7213 or visit www.youngplayersphilharmonic.org.

POPCORN™ Minority Report: Earns Major Kudos

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

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
4 popcorns

In *Minority Report*, director Steven Spielberg's splendid sci-fi delve into the future of American jurisprudence, pre-crime cop John Anderton is on the lam. Somehow it's heartening to know that 50 years hence, even when we know ahead of time who is going to commit what murder, the supposedly good cop is still being framed and hunted by a corrupt establishment. The cliché endures beautifully. Whether the protagonist is really guilty is another matter.

In any case, during one scene when Tom Cruise's detective Anderton tries to elude his former pals by scooting through every passageway in a labyrinthine mall of the future, the sooth-saying "precog" he has kidnapped alerts him to glean an umbrella from a stand.

Just 15 seconds later, he and the frightened seer exit outdoors to become part of a rain-soaked scene that, if it were a painting, might be called "Cherbourg Escape." To his would-be captors gaping down from a bridge, our hero has, for the time being, absconded under one of those many colorful umbrellas. It is a moment worthy of Hitchcock.

That's hardly faint praise. But then this is Spielberg. It wouldn't be heresy to say that one can now confidently utter his name in the same breath as the master's. *Minority Report*, the best science fiction fare to come down the cinema pike in an Eloi's age, further bears out that conviction.

Back to those precogs. There are three of them at Pre-crime Headquarters: two males and a female. They're as nifty as they are weird, sort of like human pods. Immersed 24/7 in a pool of what we must assume is a ph-balanced solution, with reverential care they are nursed by a zealous technician who's almost as bizarre as they are. They have been accorded deity-like status in some pockets of America.

For practical purposes, it is their gift of precognition that has made pre-crime detection, now in its sixth trial year, possible.

Attached to wires, encephalogram style, the precogs project their haunting visions of dastardly deeds to come in hologram images. But it takes a savvy detective to cipher them.

The protégé of Director Burgess, the brains and political driving force behind the pre-crime project portrayed by a swell Max Von Sydow, Cruise's top cop must piece the mentally-projected visions together. And then he has to dash to the location of the would-be crime to stop it before it happens.

In the opening scene, in a Georgetown block of houses, it's a cuckolded husband, a pair of kitchen sheers and the missus' handsome young beau that come filtering over the telepathic waves. The three precogs begin whining and flailing. Though they've divined these scenes hundreds of times before, apparently murder is never easy to witness.

Anderton fleshes out most of it, noting a park in the background that narrows down the location. Upon his lickety-split arrival at the scene, accompanied by a retinue of fellow officers whose backpack rocket apparatus give them that flying monkey look, there is a dilemma. Which door is it?

The seconds are ticking. Just like in the old days. It's precisely this intelligently artistic balance of traditional police drama conventions and

a host of novel futuristic notions that gives *Minority Report* its wonderful mix of entertaining elements.

Is this crime prevention? Just how much of our civil liberties are we willing to trade for safety? Sound familiar? Bottom line: Can we judge and sentence someone to a lifetime of suspended animation (yep, no death sentence — they just knock you out and put you in a tube) for a crime they were going to commit?

That is the question. *Minority Report* fashions the inquiry with notable panache. As it so happens, our story takes place on the eve of a national referendum. The Pre-crime Unit has had great success in operating the controversial pilot program in Washington, D.C. Its advocates vociferously point out in the ubiquitous media of the day that nary a murder — or is it would-be murder? — has reached fruition since the program's inception.

Now, the American public is about to vote whether or not pre-crime should go national. Of course the ACLU has its opinion. The Justice Department sends its Detective Ed Witwer (Colin Farrell) to investigate and monitor matters. Watch for a clever plot twist here.

Naturally, John Anderton is all for pre-crime becoming the law of the land. Well, at least he is in the beginning. Part of it is personal. You see, he lost a little boy just before Burgess hand-picked him to spearhead the pre-crime experiment, before there was a way to stop murder. There's secondary fallout, too — the disruption of his marriage to Lara (Kathryn Morris). So he finds at least some solace in preventing like tragedies from befalling others.

Then a shadow of doubt finds its way into his sleuthing sense. Heretofore, he has believed in the infallibility of the system. Yet in pondering some old cases, he finds an inconsistency and some missing evidence.

Wouldn't you just know it? Just shortly after John's suspicions are raised, the water-bound psychics predict he will commit a murder in 36 hours. How could it be? Knowing firsthand the intolerance of the system he has helped put in place, he then hightails it for the hidden crevices and folds of this brave new world.

Not before stopping off in the country and consulting with the hippy-ish "mother of pre-crime." There he learns of the minority report, sort of the holy grail of the experiment. It could be a key to his vindication.

Thus while attempting to elude all the high-tech crime-fighting equipment and personnel that were under his command until just hours ago, Anderton is left with only his ingenuity to set things right. It's exciting. Think he'll make it?

Whether he does or not, Cruise brings his own brand of personable intensity to the role. Maintaining audience interest during the few instances when plot matters ebb, as well as gallantly riding the crest when the mixture of cerebral conjecture and derring-do sublimely flows, he again reminds us of his fine acting skill. Which for some reason or another always comes as a surprise. It shouldn't.

Because combined with Spielberg's inspired direction and a fine adaptation of Phillip K. Dick's short story by Scott Frank and Jon Cohen, Cruise's performance plays no small part in making *Minority Report* big-time movie-going.

Minority Report, rated PG-13, is a 20th Century Fox and DreamWorks release directed by Steven Spielberg and stars Tom Cruise, Kathryn Morris and Max Von Sydow. Running time: 139 minutes.

Jen's Trends

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Carnegie specialized in making her very famous trendy "molded suit" which invaded the New York fashion scene in the 30s.

By the 30s, the popularity of haute couture was dying and women were looking at the revolutionary of mass production fashion for the girl on the go, better known as ready-to-wear or also referred to as prêt-à-porter.

In the 30s, American Designer, Elizabeth Hawes jokingly asked, "Is God French?" She felt compelled to make this statement because of her difficult struggle for European approval.

Hawes was a Vassar graduate with great design and writing capabilities. She wrote about fashion in *The New Yorker* and was one of the first true American designers to be recognized. Hawes had an impressive fashion background and was best known for being part of the famous event at Lord & Taylor called "The First 100 percent-American Showing."

This famous fashion event highlighted American designs and was glorified by many local magazines, however *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* were not interested. Both of these magazines strictly believed in Parisian style and were not ready for the casual American trend to invade their prestigious magazines.

However, during the depression in the 30s, people began to accept ready-to-wear or prêt-à-porter. After all it was comfortable, stylish, affordable and most importantly it was extremely accessible.

The concept of running into a department store and picking up an outfit in your size within a few minutes was a concept people could live with. Women no longer had to wait days or weeks for their haute couture original or in most cases their knock off.

Magazines eventually caught onto this concept. The United States was going through a depression and magazines couldn't afford expensive budgets that allowed them to travel to Paris while paying French models and photographers for fashion shoots.

Harpers Bazaar and *Vogue* began to display "Americana" spreads around 1938. "Americana" focused on practical pieces that were interchangeable as opposed to the vast number of one-piece outfits that were seen in haute couture. Women didn't want to constantly wear dresses or suits, they needed comfortable clothes.

Department stores displayed with clothing by American designers flooded Seventh Avenue in New York City as well as other metropolitan areas of the United States. Lord & Taylor was one of the first department stores in existence, along with many others such as Marshall Field, Stern Bros., and Benjamin Altman. Later on came the famous Bergdorf Goodman and Saks Fifth Avenue.

In light of Fourth of July, I want to celebrate all of the extraordinary strides made by American designers who contributed to the creation of American style, which includes all of the undiscovered women who designed clothing for their families.

Your artwork and your trade has inspired present day designers and will continue to influence future generations. Some of these groundbreaking designers include:

- Gilbert Adrian (1903-1959)
- Hattie Carnegie (1889-1956)
- Wilson Folmar (1912-1975)
- Irene Lentz Gibbons (1912-1962)
- Claire McCardell (1905-1958)
- Norman Norwell (1900-1972)
- Bill Bliss (1922-2002)

Get Outta The House

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

Happy Fourth! Here are some très patriotic suggestions:

Drive to Ridgewood for a day of activities, culminating in - you guessed it - a fireworks display orchestrated by Pyrotechnico. The grand finale will be in festive red, white and blue. The big talk seems to be the skydiving display at 8 p.m., but other entertainment at Veteran's Field will include illumination twirlers, and performances by *The Remnants*, *Four Star Quartet* and *Miss Patti's School of Dance*. There will be a flag raising at 9 a.m., if you can't sleep in, and a parade at 10 a.m.

The Nashua Pride will play our own *Somerset Patriots* on this glorious holiday. The game will take place at Commerce Park Ballpark, just off I-287 in nearby Bridgewater. Minor league ball gives fans a chance to see the action close-up, and to check out the players; some will inevitably be swept up into the majors next season. Don't leave there without your Sparkee Bobble Head Doll. You'll have plenty leftover after you only pay \$5 to \$12 to get in. Game time is at 1:05 p.m., so you still have lots of time to find some local fireworks.

Or, you can take the easy road and simply head over to North Branch Park on Milltown Road, also in Bridgewater, for the *Independence Day Family Festival*. The party starts at 5 p.m. and ends at 11 p.m., with - you guessed it - a fireworks display. There will be an array of children's activities, food vendors, and entertainment including Revolutionary War reenactments.

Downtown Metuchen, like Mayberry, will host a full orchestra in a live concert with patriotic music, to be followed by fireworks. The performance begins at 7:30 p.m. Bring lawn chairs, snacks, and whatever will keep you happy for that long.

There's always the Oceanfest in Long Branch. The Promenade will be home to activities galore, including face painting, sand sculpting, crafters, bands, and, hopefully, enough to keep you busy for the 12-hours between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. when you should be there. Yes, there'll be fireworks.

My personal favorite is the Macy's Fireworks display on New York City's East River each year. This one has a special theme - "A Time for Heroes" - which extols the virtues of those who have helped our nation heal following 9/11. Bring earplugs, as an Air Force F-17 opens the celebration by breaking the sound barrier at 8 p.m. The fireworks display, the best ever, begins at 9 p.m., and lasts for about 1 1/2 hour. Firefighters will be on a barge on the East River prior to the pyrotechnics, with a patriotic water show.