

"boundaries" between the sexes is only an artificial product of male-heterosex-dominated Western culture. Following on the heels of the *Crying Game*, is the latest hot movie in London, which soon will hit these shores: *Orlando*, a film of the old Virginia Woolf novel, in which the hero/heroine changes his/her sex every century, a male one century a female the next, and so on. Get the picture? And then we have the crazy female anthropologist with the hyphenated name writing an Op-Ed page in the August New York *Times* proclaiming that "Western Culture" has

imposed the view that there are only two sexes. Instead, there are really *five*, the Orthodox, Judeo-Christian two, plus three versions of hermaphrodite, whom she claims constitutes 5 percent of the population, which 5 percent have of course been driven into the closet by our repressive culture. Next step: affirmative action quotas for the oppressed victimized hermaphrodite masses, yearning for validation. Yes, we must demand 5 percent hermaphrodites in our faculties, our professions, in the U.S. Senate, etc. Will all the oppressed hermaphrodites please stand up and reveal themselves?

And what about the Siamese

Twin masses? When I was a kid, I saw Siamese Twins at a sideshow. Surely they must be a deeply suppressed, even cut-up, 5 percent of the population. Hell, let's make it 10 percent. Ten percent affirmative action

quotas for the oppressed Siamese Twin peoples! And let's stop calling them with that disparaging name "Siamese." They are "Native American Twins!"

Sound of Music, oh *Sound of Music*, you were really a tedious movie, but please, please, Bring it Back! Bring Back the Old Culture before it's too late! Who will deliver us from this horrible Freak House that our culture

has become? — M.N.R. ■

Who will deliver us from this Freak House culture?

A French Masterpiece! by Mr. First Nighter

Faithful readers of mine are in for a severe shock. As they well know, I am notoriously hostile to films that are (a) slow, (b) dark and murky, (c) with long close-ups of suffering actors' faces substituting for dialogue, and (d) in a foreign language. Indeed, these four elements almost always go together.

Recently, I saw a movie which

has all four of these elements. So much so, in fact, that an old friend of mine, who *loves* slow, plotless, gloomy, avant-garde movies, saw the film in Paris, and said that he and his friends went reeling out of the theater, "holding their heads," after three long, suffering hours. (Actually, it's less than two hours, but to him it felt like three.) I went to the theater fully prepared either to squirm uncomfortably, or to take a nap in the luxurious seats.

Instead, to the stunned surprise of myself and my wife, I found a genuine masterpiece, one of the best and most notable pictures in years. The picture is indeed French: *Tous Les Matins du Monde*, ("Every Morning in the World") directed by Alain Corneau, from a novel written in conjunction with the movie by Pascal Quignard, who then transformed it into the screenplay. It's true that there is little dialogue, but essentially substituting for it is truly glorious seventeenth-century French Baroque music, featuring the Baroque *viola da gamba*, essentially the Baroque ancestor to the modern cello. The music is truly a revelation, largely composed by the main figures in the movie. For the plot of the movie concerns the legendary 17th century violist and composer Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe (no first name known), and his student and disciple, the better-known Marin Marais. In addition to being a movie about little-remembered but marvellous musicians and composers, the soundtrack and the plot feature the music itself. It is also a romantic, moving and

perceptive film about the truths and tensions of master-disciple relationship, which carries insights beyond music into scholarship, science, and indeed every walk of life. Sainte-Colombe is the pure musician, who, while the premier violist and composer of his day, has retreated into a quasi-hermetic existence, not merely out of mourning for his dead young wife, but also in revulsion against the trivialization of music by the flashy musicians and composers of King Louis XIV's court.

Scorning a call to play in the King's service, Sainte-Colombe is pestered by a bright young violist and composer who wants to study under him; the master is reluctant, for he sees the opportunism in the young lad's character. In later years, the student, young Marin Marais, indeed betrays Sainte-Colombe's daughter and leaves to become famous in the King's service; but later, older and fatter, Marin, knowing that the true soul of music had escaped him, returns to try to listen undetected to hear Sainte-Colombe play the marvelous lost compositions that the master refuses to publish and will take with him to his grave. In a stunning final sequence, the dying Sainte-Colombe and the returned and chastened Marais play a magnificent and heart-rending viola duet of the previously lost music.

The older Marais is played by the highly overrated Gerard Depardieu, but fortunately his part is a small one, the young Marais played by his son Guillaume, who actually looks very

little like his old man. But the real star of the movie is Jean-Pierre Marielle, who is simply magnificent as the noble maitre, Sainte-Colombe.

This is one of the great films of recent years, which should not be missed. Although you should be warned that if you are so base as not to like Baroque music, this movie is not for you. The film came out in late 1991, but why didn't it receive the foreign film Oscar last year?

Actually, I am happy to report that this film received seven Cesars (the French equivalent of the Oscar), and won awards for Best Film, Best Director, and Best Music. The sound track for *Tous Les Matins* has also been a big hit; over 350,000 copies of the CD have been sold in Europe; outselling even Michael Jackson in France, and was also No. 1 in Argentina. When the film opened in New York, 5,000 copies of the CD were sold in

Quotes That Need No Comment

Christopher Columbus was a Portuguese secret agent, whose voyage to America was an elaborate trick played on the Spanish to further Portugal's commercial interests, according to controversial new research. . . . This theory, the result of twenty years' research by Mascarenhas Barreto, a historian at Lisbon University, is the subject of a book just published in Britain. . . . His theory has received support from a handful of academics in Portugal and America. But most reject it. "Tripe," commented Professor Charles Boxer, *eminence grise* of British Columbus specialists. — The London *Sunday Independent*

When Franz Schonhuber heard in December that the far-right Republican party he heads was to be put under observation on suspicion of being anti-democratic, his reaction was provocative: "Greetings from Hitler!" . . . In his dealings with officialdom and the media, he often appears reasonable, even plausible. Yet at his rallies he can strike chords that set alarm bells ringing throughout Germany. For instance, when he says: "Germany must come first; we are not the welfare office of the Mediterranean; the Deutschmark must never be sacrificed on the altar of European union; we must never allow the green flag of Islam to fly here." Franz Schonhuber himself is not a new Adolf Hitler. But the great fear remains that, if the particular genie that he represents were ever to be let out of the bottle, there is no telling where it would lead. — The London *Sunday Independent*

"Group Helps Those Abducted by UFOs Feel Less Alienated" — L.A. *Times*

"Officials Fear Much of Cult's Arsenal May Be Legal" — L.A. *Times*

"Western culture is committed to the idea that there are only two sexes." — Anne Fausto-Sterling, *New York Times*

Mrs. [Arianna Stassinopoulos] Huffington's goal is the redemption of the Republican Party. If she has her way, greed and selfishness will be banished forever, to be replaced by altruism, compassion, and the "kinder, gentler" world George Bush talked about but failed to deliver. — *New York Times*

one week, actually outselling Madonna's "Erotica." Hey, maybe there's hope for our culture yet!

Music historians are griping because the plot is inaccurate, since little is known of Sainte-Colombe's life. But who cares? What's wrong with fiction? As it is, the film is a wonderful romantic tribute to musicians as well as to music, and to the best of the Old Culture. Music scholar Mark Kroll writes in the journal *Bostonia* (Spring 1993) that "there are moments in the film when one seems to be looking at a painting by Vermeer or Watteau which has come to life. Several musicians have also commented how startled they were by the *quiet*; that is, how faithfully the director was able to recreate the acoustical context in which this music was actually heard, one undisturbed by all the external white noise pollution of twentieth-century life." Yes, yes! See the movie, then buy the soundtrack, for the Baroque, in music, art, architecture, was the pinnacle that human civilization has yet reached. — M.N.R. ■

The School-Choice Scam

by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

A private industry in Wisconsin was demanding public subsidies, no matter what the cost to an already overburdened state budget. Do tax-and-spend liberals have no shame? But

wait a minute, it was the neo-conservatives who went to the mattresses over this issue. And the industry they want to subsidize was private schools, in the name of school "choice."

The Bush administration wanted such a program nationally, and Republicans in Congress still do. William F. Buckley, Jr., contributed to the campaign of Linda Cross, the pro-voucher candidate for school superintendent in the recent Wisconsin election. Neoconservative pundit William J. Bennett addressed one of her fundraising events on the glories of vouchers. And Wisconsin's Bradley Foundation, headed by neoconservative Michael Joyce, poured money into the school "choice" cause.

Despite lush national funding and vociferous backing from the *Wall Street Journal* Cross was defeated 47-35, suggesting that Wisconsinites—which under Governor Tommy Thompson is trying to reform present welfare programs—don't want a welfare program for private schools.

If some Republicans have their way, the cost to taxpayers will be astronomical. At a January National Review Institute meeting, former Bush aide James Pinkerton suggested that his party promise an \$8,000 per kid government subsidy for private schools. This could create a welfare program bigger than Food Stamps and Medicare combined.

Why do Republicans favor such a program? For some, the failure of the public schools is responsible, and they see government vouchers as the alter-

native. They also like the fact that the National Education Association opposes the plan. But union opposition doesn't make this a good idea, and like other government subsidies, school vouchers are a bad and dangerous idea.

First, the program is expensive. None of the organizations supporting vouchers want voucher money to be taken out of existing school expenditures. They want voucher cash to be "fresh money," newly acquired from taxpayer shakedowns. That means Americans will be taxed twice for education: once for public schools and again for private ones.

Second, tuition vouchers will lead to government control of private schools. In the voucher program already running in Milwaukee, for example, and supported by the Bradley Foundation, recipient schools must abide by at least ten new statutes—some state and some federal—that regulate, among other areas, discipline, curriculum, and admissions.

The strength of private schools is their autonomy. Once they go on the dole, they will inevitably succumb to political pressure to gut religious programs and entrance requirements. Conservatives are supposed to know this.

Third, vouchers will make private schools less efficient. Right now, they must compete and stay financially sound. They are subject to the discipline of the market. Give them massive subsidies, and the incentive to control costs, and offer outstanding programs, is diminished. Conservatives are