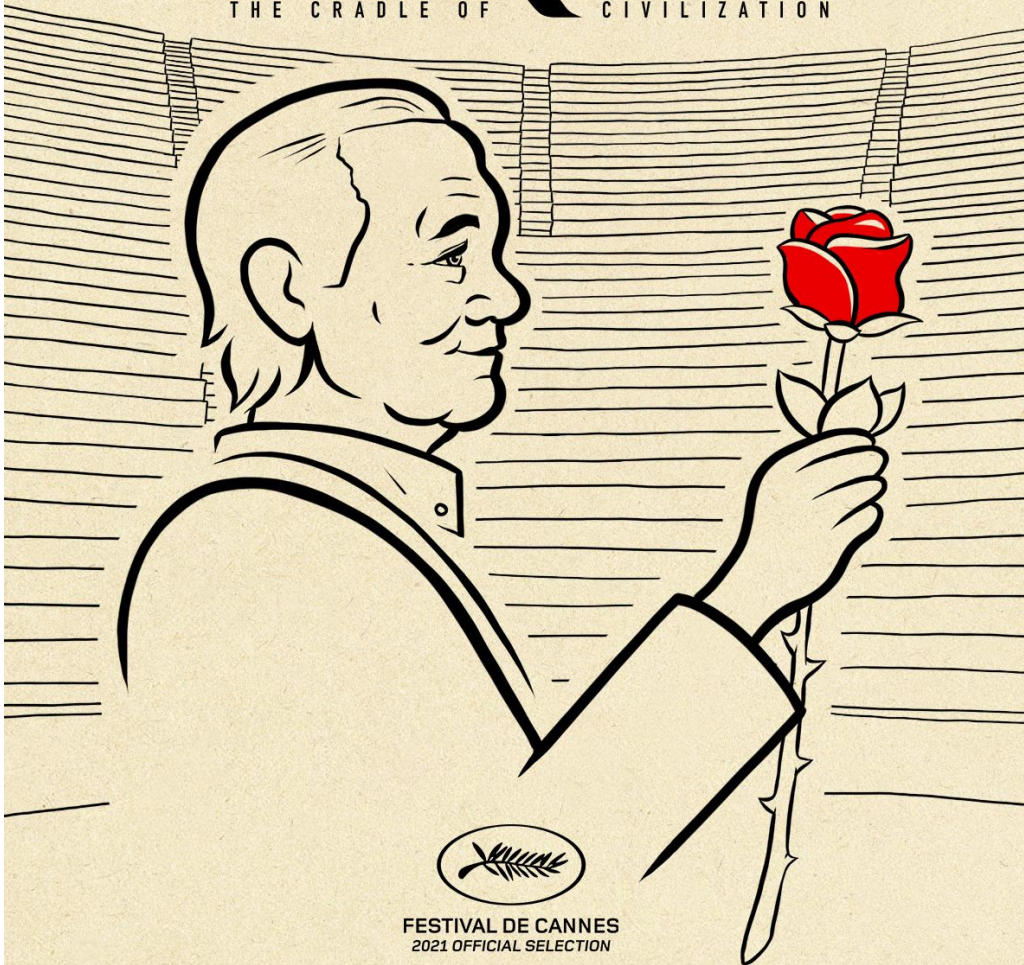


BILL MURRAY, JAN VOGLER & FRIENDS
IN

NEW WORLDS

THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2021 OFFICIAL SELECTION

A DORN MUSIC NEDA FILM and MAKUHARI MEDIA Production BILL MURRAY JAN VOGLER
MIRA WANG and VANESSA PEREZ, in "NEW WORLDS: THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION"
Lighting Designer RICK SIEGEL Live Sound Engineer CHACE DESCHENE Edited by JON CONNOR Director of Photography MIKE GOMES
Created for the Stage by JAN VOGLER and BILL MURRAY Co-Producers KAREN DUFFY EMMA DOXIADI
Produced by TANJA DORN AMANDA LIVANOU BILL MURRAY ANDREW MUSCATO JAN VOGLER Directed by ANDREW MUSCATO

Press & Media Contact

Fiona Csauth

csauth@dornmusic.com

C: +49 176 24 619 663

Film Sales Contact

Tanja Dorn

dorn@dornmusic.com

C: +49 162 1091 889

NEW WORLDS: THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION
is a production of **DORN MUSIC, NEDA FILM & MAKUHARI MEDIA**

Starring
BILL MURRAY
JAN VOGLER
MIRA WANG
VANESSA PEREZ

Directed by
ANDREW MUSCATO

Produced by
TANJA DORN
AMANDA LIVANOU
JAN VOGLER
BILL MURRAY
ANDREW MUSCATO

Co-Producers
KAREN DUFFY
EMMA DOXIADI

Director of Photography
MIKE GOMES

Editor
JON CONNOR

Lighting Designer
RICK SIEGEL

Live Sound Engineer
CHACE DESCHENE

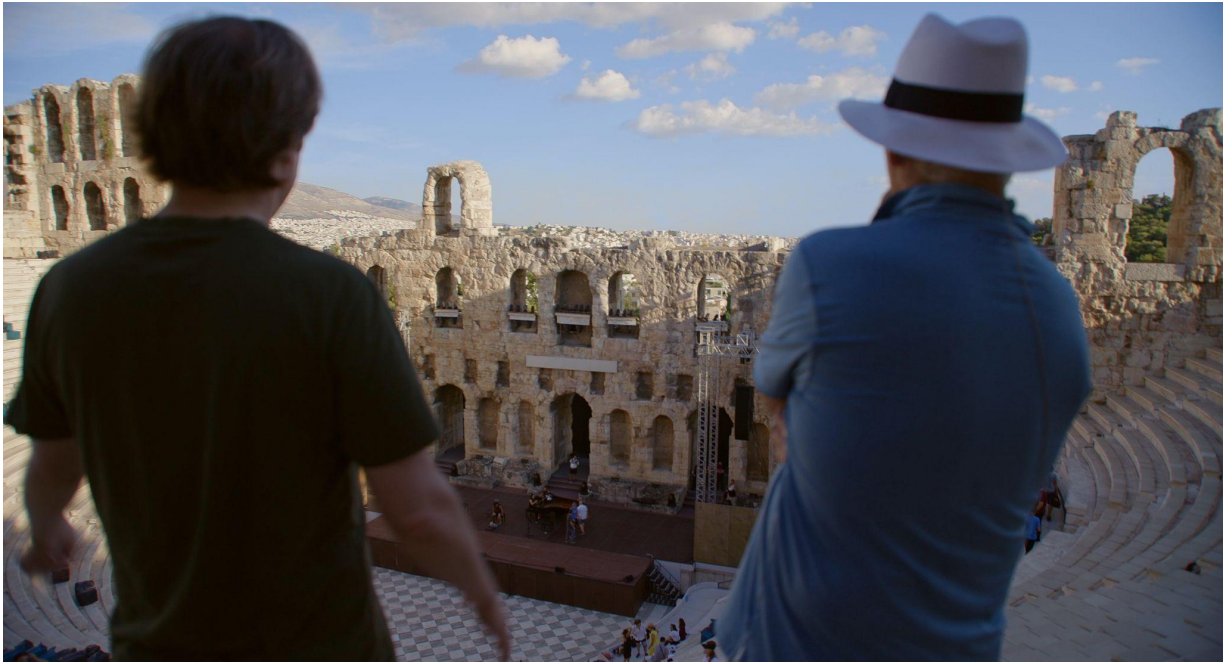
Created For The Stage by
JAN VOGLER & BILL MURRAY

This film was made with generous support from
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC
GREEK FILM CENTRE

Runtime: 102 minutes, Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1
Presented in 4K, 5.1 Surround Sound

Downloadable Key Art and Production Stills

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/o6o88jq9foovjpk/AACARPh1HvKvDYOGC0GPIAYZa?dl=0>

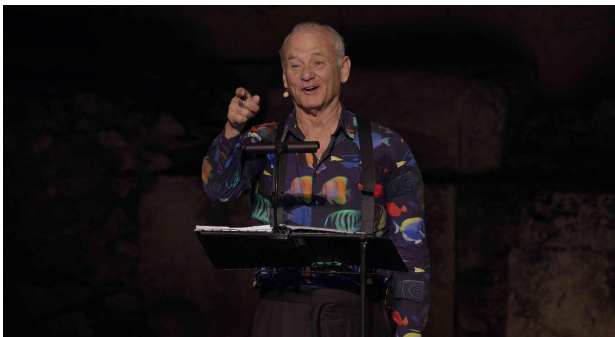


LOGLINE

Filmed one summer night in Greece, ***New Worlds: The Cradle of Civilization***, captures screen legend Bill Murray and world-renowned cellist Jan Vogler's final performance of their European "New Worlds" tour.

SYNOPSIS

On a glorious Greek evening, screen legend **Bill Murray** and world-renowned cellist **Jan Vogler** rock the Acropolis with a timeless mix of poetry and music. Captured on film by director **Andrew Muscato**, Murray and Vogler are joined by the dazzling **Mira Wang** (violin) and dynamic **Vanessa Perez** (piano). The international quartet enchants the Athenian audience from the 2,000 year-old stage of the Odeon of Herodes Atticus with musical reflections on love, hope and heartbreak. Spanning from Bach to Van Morrison, Whitman to West Side Story, the wildly entertaining, humorous and deeply touching program is infused with the one-of-a-kind charm of Bill Murray.



"The film is gorged with everything we love about Bill Murray... a magnificent show captured on film by Andrew Muscato, where we see European and American artists making art together."

*-Festival de Cannes,
Official Selection description*

ABOUT BILL MURRAY, JAN VOGLER & FRIENDS

BILL MURRAY (vocals) is an Academy Award-nominee, and winner of the BAFTA Award, and Golden Globe. Recipient of the 2016 Mark Twain Prize for Comedy, Murray is beloved the world over for his performances on *Saturday Night Live* and in countless movie classics. He also currently stars in another Cannes Official Selection, Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch*.

JAN VOGLER's (cello) distinguished career has brought him together with renowned conductors and internationally acclaimed orchestras around the world, such as New York Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and London Philharmonic Orchestra. His great ability allowed him to explore the sound boundaries of the cello and to establish an intensive dialogue with contemporary composers and artists. This includes regular world premieres, including works by Tigran Mansurian (with WDR Symphony Orchestra conducted by Semyon Bychkov), John Harbison (with Mira Wang and the Boston Symphony Orchestra), Udo Zimmermann (Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra), Wolfgang Rihm (Double Concerto with Mira Wang), Jörg Widman (Cello Concerto *Dunkle Saiten*, dedicated to Jan Vogler himself) and Nico Muhly, Sven Helbig and Zhou-Long (*Drei Kontinente – Konzert für Cello und Orchester*, composed for Jan Vogler). The *New York Times* praises his "soulful, richly hued playing" and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* grants him the ability "to make his cello speak like a singing voice". Jan Vogler has been working successfully with the Sony Classical label since 2003 and in the course of this cooperation around 20 CDs have been produced so far. The East German-born Vogler plays a golden-period cello by Antonia Stradivari. <https://www.janvogler.com/> Twitter: @jancello, Instagram: @janvoglercello

MIRA WANG (violin) has built a remarkable bridge from her time as a child prodigy in Beijing, China to an acclaimed soloist on the world stage today. She has won first prizes in several international violin competitions including the Geneva Competition. Wang has appeared as a soloist with many prestigious orchestras all over the world including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Staatskapelle Dresden, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and Singapore Symphony Orchestra. Wang has recorded extensively for many labels including Sony Classical and Edel Classics. She plays on a violin by Antonia Stradivari that once belonged to Joseph Joachim.

VANESSA PEREZ (piano) is a product of the energized musical culture of Venezuela. She has developed a significant international profile, and has performed with conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, Gustav Meier, James Judd, David Gimenez Carreras, and Carlos Miguel Prieto. As The Washington Post lauded, Venezuelan-American pianist Vanessa Perez "is not to be taken lightly." Praised for her bold, passionate performing style allied with musicianship of keen sensitivity, Perez has been championed by iconic keyboard performers, from the great Claudio Arrau to Lazar Berman and Tamàs Vàsàry. Perez is a Steinway Artist. <https://www.vanessaperez.com/>



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



ANDREW MUSCATO's unique career spans genre and medium. Immediately following the Cannes premiere of *New Worlds*, Muscato will travel to Thailand to produce *The Greatest Beer Run Ever* for Apple and Skydance Media. The film is writer/director Peter Farrelly's anticipated follow up to Academy Award Best Picture-winner, *Green Book*. Muscato's first feature documentary *The Zen of Bobby V.* was an Official Selection at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival. It was produced while Muscato was still an undergraduate film student at NYU Tisch. Muscato has worked as a video journalist for NBC News and The Athletic.

He has narrated and produced a podcast for ESPN, and directed documentary shorts for VICE. His feature producing credits include ground-breaking investigative documentaries *Ballplayer: Pelotero* and *Schooled*. His feature directing credits include documentaries *Branca's Pitch* and *MOOCH* || *Twitter:* @ajmuscato, *Instagram* @ajmuscato

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

How did this film come about?

In June 2018, I was in Wyoming covering the first legal bare knuckle boxing match in U.S. history for VICE when I received a text from Bill asking if I would like to film the 'New Worlds' concert at the Acropolis. Of course, I was honored to do it. I had previously seen their show at Carnegie Hall and was moved by it so much that I had traveled to see it a second time in California. Bill also knew that I had friends in production in Athens and I could assemble an experienced crew at a moments notice. No sooner was I home from Wyoming than I boarded a flight to Athens, Greece.

How did the concert at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus compare to other live 'New Worlds' shows?

The program Bill Murray and Jan Vogler put together is full of timeless music and poetry, so it is appropriate that we captured the show in an equally timeless setting. The Odeon of Herodes Atticus is a grand, cinematic, open-air space that compliments the rock and roll energy of their live show well. For example there's perhaps no better venue to watch Bill belting to the heavens, Van Morrison's "When Will I Ever Learn to Live in God." The song is an absolute showstopper, especially the way they performed it that night.

How involved was Bill Murray in the making of the film?

Bill was eager to participate in the edit process, and I was thrilled to collaborate with him. My editor (Jon Connor) and I put an assembly cut together in late 2019 and then went through it shot-by-shot (in some cases frame-by-frame) with Bill. The three of us continued working off-and-on throughout 2020; sometimes remotely but finishing the edit in-person. Similarly Jan, Mira and Vanessa participated in the sound mix. One of the prevailing themes of the program is relationships, so it's maybe no surprise that throughout the post-production process I became better friends with all four members of the group and got to know them better as artists too.

How would you describe Bill Murray as you have gotten to know him?

As you would expect, Bill Murray is without a doubt the wittiest person I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. But there is so much more to him than that. He is also an emotionally deep, intellectually curious artist with a genuine appreciation for poetry, literature, and all genres of music. I think his fans will enjoy experiencing that side of Bill Murray.

PRODUCTION NOTES

- **Bill Murray** and **Jan Vogler** first met on a flight from Berlin to New York in 2013. The pair forged a strong friendship founded upon a deep curiosity for each others' artistic worlds.
- The idea for a program entitled **New Worlds** originated when actor Bill Murray and cellist Jan Vogler met and decided to make a project of their mutual love of music and literature. The program showcases American values in both art forms and how American writers, actors, and musicians have built bridges between America and Europe.
- In 2017 the official *New Worlds* studio album was released by **DECCA Gold**. That same year **Bill Murray, Jan Vogler & Friends** embarked on a 55-city international concert tour which saw the group perform in some of the world's most prestigious venues such as **Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House, Kennedy Center, Royal Festival Hall, and Berliner Philharmonie**.
- At the time, **Murray** was quoted as saying, "We are from four different continents (North America, South America, Asia and Europe). And when the continents come together, the music moves right across the peninsulas from one to the other. It's just a short journey from one continent to the other"
- In addition to the husband and wife duo of Jan Vogler and Mira Wang, Vanessa Perez's husband **Stephen Buck** provided the musical arrangements for many of the songs performed. Buck is himself a chamber pianist and a professor of music at SUNY-Purchase in New York, USA.
- June 19, 2018 Bill Murray, Jan Vogler & Friends performed at **The Odeon of Herodes Atticus** in Athens, Greece. The concert was programmed by **Angela Kollia** of MINOS EMI for the annual **Athens Epidaurus Festival**. The Athens concert served as the basis for the film **New Worlds: The Cradle of Civilization**.
- Two weeks before the Athens concert, at the suggestion of his good-friend **Karen Duffy**, Murray asked filmmaker **Andrew Muscato** to assemble a Greek production crew and film the concert.
- Muscato (a dual national of USA and Ireland) traveled to Athens with director of photography **Mike Gomes** (also a dual national of USA and Portugal). They were aided by Athens based producers **Amanda Livanou**, and **Emma Doxiadi**, and a team of Greek camera operators, sound engineers, and production staff.
- In December of 2019, Muscato and Murray began assembling the film with editor **Jon Connor**. Editing continued in person and remotely throughout 2020.
- The concert was mixed in New York City by music producer **Alex Bilowitz**. He is co-writer of the record-breaking worldwide #1 hit pop single "Butter," performed by K-Pop band BTS.

PROGRAM NOTES

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Prelude from Suite No. 1 in G Major for Unaccompanied Cello, BWV 1007 performed by Jan Vogler

With their monumental position in the repertoire today, it is difficult to imagine that Bach's six suites for unaccompanied cello were virtually unknown before 1900. In 1889 at the age of thirteen, Pablo Casals discovered a manuscript of the suites in a Barcelona thrift shop and set to work on them. He did not dare to perform one publicly until at least a decade of study and was reported to have practiced them daily for the rest of his life.

Along with its companion pieces, the Suite No. 1 in G Major was composed probably between 1717 and 1723 when Bach was Kapellmeister in Cöthen. Like all the suites, No. 1 is a challenge in both technical prowess and emotional content. Among the six suites, No. 1 is the most often performed. The Prelude to Suite No. 1 is a strong musical introduction to the six movements of the Suite. It also serves the musical and literary aspects of this program entitled *New Worlds* since few composers have crossed the musical world as lavishly as Bach.

Walt Whitman (1819-1892) From "Song of the Open Road" and "Song of Myself" performed by Bill Murray

Walt Whitman's freedom of style and thought earned him the title of America's "first poet of democracy." Fine examples of this are "Song of the Open Road" and "Song of Myself" which are both part of Whitman's monumental collection of poems, Leaves of Grass, that was published in various editions over forty years of his life. "Song of the Open Road," from the second edition in 1856, pictures the outdoors as a utopia where all men can come together. "Song of Myself," from the first edition in 1855, is not a self-portrayal as the title suggests but rather a description of Whitman's vision of common people's role in society. Passages critical of the slavery rampant at the time brought criticism from conservatives. In 1882, Boston's District Attorney threatened action against Leaves of Grass for violating Massachusetts obscenity laws with specific references to "Song of Myself." Gone from both poems are the rhyme, stylized format, and flowery descriptions we associate with much traditional 19th century poetry. Here is sterner stuff pointing to the language of Hemingway and the 20th century. With that, the poems also have a distinct and moving sense of poetry and song.

James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) from The Deerslayer performed by Bill Murray

Bill Murray reads from James Fenimore Cooper's classic American novel, The Deerslayer of 1841, the last of Cooper's famous series of five novels called Leatherstocking Tales. The novels tell the story of Natty Bumppo (also known as Hawkeye, Deerslayer, Pathfinder, Leatherstocking, and Trapper), an 18th century Anglo-American raised in part by Native Americans. The story is a complicated one resting on Natty Bumppo's objection to the then common practice of taking scalps. A central issue of the story is the conflict between the forces that draw Natty Bumppo to the woods and those which seek to attach him to other human beings. The setting is Otsego Lake in upstate New York where Natty Bumppo and his friend Chingachgook plot a rescue of Chingachgook's betrothed who has been abducted by the hostile Huron Indians. Natty Bumppo is conflicted when his manhood is tested by his choice whether or not to shoot another human being. The novel has been treated in film, radio, and television.

PROGRAM NOTES (cont'd)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) Andante un poco mosso from the Piano Trio in B-flat Major, D.989 performed by Jan Vogler, Mira Wang, & Vanessa Perez

Written probably within a year of his death, Schubert's B-flat Piano Trio marks a period of enormous creative output despite his steadily weakening health. There is some question of whether or not the B-flat Trio was performed at the March 26, 1828 concert of Schubert's music, the only public performance of his works during his lifetime. When it was published in 1836, Robert Schumann said of it in his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, "A glance at Schubert's trio and all miserable human commotion vanishes, and the world shines in a new splendor."

The second movement *Andante un poco mosso* is beautiful song unmatched in its expressiveness. The cello sings out over a piano accompaniment. The violin and piano each restate the theme with countermelodies offered by the other instruments, a fine example of Schubert's ability to create what seems to be an endless melody generating within a continuously evolving structure. While Beethoven and Brahms also did this in their building of musical ideas from one kernel, Schubert employed the device so naturally in his music that we hear it there only in terms of emotional effectiveness. Beneath the expressiveness of the movement lies perfect Classical sonata form.

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) "Group Feeling" from The Art of Fiction No. 21 (Paris Review)

This reading is taken from *The Paris Review's* interview with Hemingway when he was asked if he had a "group feeling" with other writers and artists in Paris during the 1920s. Hemingway's response was negative about any "group feeling," but he described the respect the famous group had for one another and specifically mentioned notable figures such as Gris, Picasso, Braque, Monet, Joyce, Pound, and Stein.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) "Blues" from Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 2 performed by Mira Wang and Vanessa Perez

The second movement, "Blues," from Ravel's *Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano* serves as a scherzo in true Classical spirit despite its obvious bow to American jazz. When on tour in the United States, Ravel once commented that the "blues" was one of the great American musical discoveries. Ravel achieves the "blues" effect by assigning a saxophone-like wail to the violin, achieved by slides from one note to the next while the piano imitates the strumming of a guitar.

For the premiere of the *Sonata*, Ravel was pianist with violinist and composer George Enesco.

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) "With Pascin at the Dome" from A Moveable Feast performed by Bill Murray

Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* is a memoir of his years as a young expatriate journalist and writer in Paris of the 1920s. The book was published posthumously in 1964 by Charles Scribner's Sons. A restored edition was published in 2009 by Seán Hemingway, an assistant curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and grandson of Hemingway. After the Paris attacks of November 13, 2015, *A Moveable Feast* became a best-seller in Paris bookstores as a symbol of defiance and a celebration of Paris.

The 1964 edition of the book consists of a series of twenty chapters that can each stand on its own as a story. The eleventh chapter, "With Pascin at the Dome," treats Hemingway's friendship with Jules Pascin, a Bulgarian painter and fellow Parisian expatriate, with whom he regularly meets at the Dome Cafe—this time with two models who are sisters.

PROGRAM NOTES (cont'd)

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) La Muerte del ángel performed by Jan Vogler, Mira Wang & Vanessa Perez

Piazzolla's studies with Alberto Ginastera led him to studies in Paris with the legendary Nadia Boulanger. Piazzolla gives a wonderful account of his reluctance to admit to her that he played the bandoneon rather than the piano. He presented to her what he called his "kilos of symphonies and sonatas." She responded that they were "well-written," but that she could not find Piazzolla in them. Finally he played his tangos for her to which she responded, "You idiot, that's Piazzolla!" He commented, "And I took all the music I composed, ten years of my life, and sent it to hell in two seconds." Despite this, Piazzolla maintained his dedication to classical chamber music and symphonic works even though they retain his native Argentinian instincts leading to his evolution of traditional tango style to what is now called nuevo tango.

"La Muerte del Angel" (Death of the Angel), composed in 1962, is part of Piazzolla's incidental music to Alberto Rodriguez Muñoz's play Tango del ángel in which an angel heals the spirits of residents of a poor Buenos Aires neighborhood but is ultimately killed in a knife fight. In addition to its nationalistic qualities, the vibrant and delicious work uses classic fugue form evident in its opening passages. A lyrical middle section intervenes before a return to the fugue which ends with a dramatic piano glissando.

George Gershwin (1898-1937) "It Ain't Necessarily So" from Porgy and Bess performed by Bill Murray, Mira Wang & Vanessa Perez

Despite its humor, "It Ain't Necessarily So" is still within the over-arching serious theme of this program which is the expression of American values in music and literature. It also expresses the integration of popular and classical art forms in a uniquely American way. This brief and delicious moment in American music is based on the famous song from George and Ira Gershwin's 1935 opera, Porgy and Bess. It is sung by the character, Sportin' Life, a drug dealer who expresses his cynical doubts about several biblical statements. Since then, the song has moved through many permutations including one by the great violin virtuoso, Jascha Heifetz. The racially-charged theme of the opera brought initial unpopular reception, but since the 1976 Houston Grand Opera production Porgy and Bess has come into its own as one of the most frequently performed operas. "It Ain't Necessarily So" remains one of its gems.

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) Oblivion performed by Jan Vogler, Mira Wang & Vanessa Perez

"Oblivion," composed in 1982, is one of Piazzolla's most popular tangos but not for reasons of gaiety. Its mysterious and forbidding opening leads to a sad lyricism movingly expressed by the cello while the piano keeps things in order. Bill Murray and Mira Wang will bring sadness to their dancing. "Oblivion" was used in the soundtrack for Marco Bellochino's 1984 film Henry IV, the Mad King.

Billy Collins (b. 1942) Forgetfulness performed by Bill Murray

American poet William James "Billy" Collins was appointed Poet Laureate of the United States from 2001 to 2003 and was New York State Poet from 2004 to 2006. On September 6, 2002 he was invited to read his poem "The Names" at a special joint session of the US Congress held in memory of the victims of 9/11. His acclaimed "Fishing on the Susquehanna in July" was added to the preserved works of the United States Native American literary registry. Among his many awards is the 2014 Norman Mailer Prize for Poetry. His some sixteen volumes of poetry include The Art of Drowning, The Trouble with Poetry, Horoscopes for the Dead, Aimless Love, and The Rain in Portugal.

Collin's poem "Forgetfulness" gives warning about the nature of forgetting things as one grows older.

PROGRAM NOTES (cont'd)

Stephen Foster (1826-1864) "Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair" performed by Bill Murray, Jan Vogler, Mira Wang & Vanessa Perez

Stephen Foster's some two hundred songs have gained him the title of "the father of American music." You can probably hum many of them such as "Oh, Susanna," "Old Folks at Home," and certainly "Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair" treated on this program. That song, first published in 1854, was inspired by Foster's separation from his wife Jennie who is surely the source of longing and dreaming that pervades the song. Despite its lasting fame, it was not successful at the time of its publication and brought Foster only \$200 in royalties for its ten thousand copies sold. Such is the sad tale of the beautiful song "floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air." Some of us may remember other versions such as Spike Jones' humorous treatment "I Dream of Brownie with the Light Blue Jeans" or Jascha Heifetz's violin transcription which became one of his signature pieces still performed by many violinists today. Bill Murray, Mira Wang, and Jan Vogler give us a unique version for narrator, violin, cello, and piano.

Van Morrison (b. 1941) "When Will I Ever Learn to Live in God" (arr. Stephen Buck) performed by Bill Murray, Jan Vogler, Mira Wang & Vanessa Perez

With the music of Irish singer, songwriter, and instrumentalist, Van Morrison, we cross the sometimes narrow bridge from classical music to a form we loosely call "soul" or R&B. On a broader level, Morrison's music has been described as "spiritually-inspired musical journeys that show the influence of Celtic tradition, jazz, and stream-of-consciousness narrative." One of world's best-known and prolific producers of such music, Morrison was knighted in 2016 and now bears the title Sir George Ivan "Van" Morrison although he is still known informally as "Van the Man." He has received two Grammy Awards and the Brit Award for Outstanding Contribution to Music.

As suggested in his song, "When Will I Ever Learn to Live in God," Morrison's lyrics are reflective of such poets as William Blake and William Butler Yeats. Biographer Brian Hinton states that Morrison "is returning poetry to its roots...to form a new reality."

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) Allegro from the Sonata for Cello and Piano in D Minor, Op. 40 performed by Jan Vogler & Vanessa Perez

The personal situation that surrounded the composition of the D Minor Cello Sonata cannot explain its excellence, but surely it contributed to the anguished mood of the work. Written in the late summer of 1934, the Sonata coincides with the strains on Shostakovich's marriage caused by his love for a young translator, Elena Konstantinovskaya. He began composing the Sonata when his wife Nina left him. Soon after its first performance in Leningrad on Christmas of 1934, he asked for a divorce. When Shostakovich learned that Nina was pregnant with their first child, the couple reconciled.

While the emotional factors were significant, so were the musical ones that affected the work. At the time, Shostakovich referred to what he called his "struggle for a simple language." This may explain the Neoclassical structure of the work, which caused Prokofiev to comment that Shostakovich was following bourgeois trends, a dangerous thing for a composer to do in 1934. Yet Shostakovich's personal war between Western Neoclassicism and Socialist Realism was a struggle with which he would contend many times during his career.

The second movement Allegro of the D Minor Sonata bursts forth with the force of a Russian peasant dance. It ends abruptly but not before we catch moments of humor. The Sonata was written for cellist Viktor Kubatsky who premiered the work with Shostakovich reportedly playing the piano part from memory.

PROGRAM NOTES (cont'd)

James Thurber (1894-1961) "If Grant Had Been Drinking at Appomattox" performed by Bill Murray

James Thurber's hilarious tale paints Ulysses S. Grant, a notorious drinker, as being confused about who was surrendering when Robert E. Lee showed up at the McLean house in Appomattox for the surrendering proceedings. The story was first published in *The New Yorker* on December 6, 1930 and later included in Thurber's collection of short stories entitled The Middle-Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze.

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) "Somewhere," "I Feel Pretty," and "America" from West Side Story arr. Stephen Sondheim, performed by Bill Murray, Jan Vogler, Mira Wang & Vanessa Perez

Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, with lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and choreography by Jerome Robbins, retains an iconic place in American musical history. First produced on Broadway in 1957, it ran for 732 performances before going on tour and was nominated for six Tony Awards. The 1961 film version starring Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Rita Moreno, George Chakiris, and Russ Tamblyn won ten Academy Awards.

The story, based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, explores the rivalry between two teenage street gangs of different ethnic backgrounds, the Jets and the Sharks, on New York's Upper West Side. Maria and Tony, members of the opposing forces, fall in love despite their different backgrounds. Much violence marks the story, but Bernstein manages wonderful lyrical and even amusing moments in such songs as "Somewhere," "I Feel Pretty," and "America" treated by Bill Murray, Mira Wang, Jan Vogler, and Vanessa Perez for the closing moments of their remarkable program.

"Somewhere," from Act II, is sung by Maria and Tony as they dream about fleeing to a peaceful place. Strangely enough, the theme of the song is borrowed from the slow movement of Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto*, an uncanny borrowing which Alex Ross describes in his *The Rest is Noise* as "Beethoven Americanized." The opening statement also resounds from the trains in the New York subway, something this writer heard for years and was happy to have it confirmed by *The New York Times* in 2009. "I Feel Pretty," from an earlier moment in Act II, occurs as Maria innocently discovers her love for Tony and daydreams about seeing him. "America," from Act I, is a hilarious but provocative moment as Shark girls discuss the differences between Puerto Rico and the United States. One longs for her home country of Puerto Rico and another defends life in America. All three songs are unforgettable moments in *West Side Story*.

LINKS

- **New Worlds: The Cradle of Civilization - Official Trailer (English)**
<https://youtu.be/l94Ky7cYrZg>
- **New Worlds: The Cradle of Civilization - Official Twitter**
<https://twitter.com/newworldsfilm>
- **New Worlds: The Cradle of Civilization - Official Instagram**
<https://www.instagram.com/newworldsfilm/>
- **Dorn Music**
<https://dornmusic.com/>
https://twitter.com/dorn_music
<https://www.instagram.com/dornmusic/>
- **Neda Film**
<https://www.nedafilm.gr/en/>
<https://www.instagram.com/neda.film/>
- **Makuhari Media**
<https://www.makuharimedia.com/>
- **Greek Film Centre**
<http://www.gfc.gr/en/>

