

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

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Shakespeare

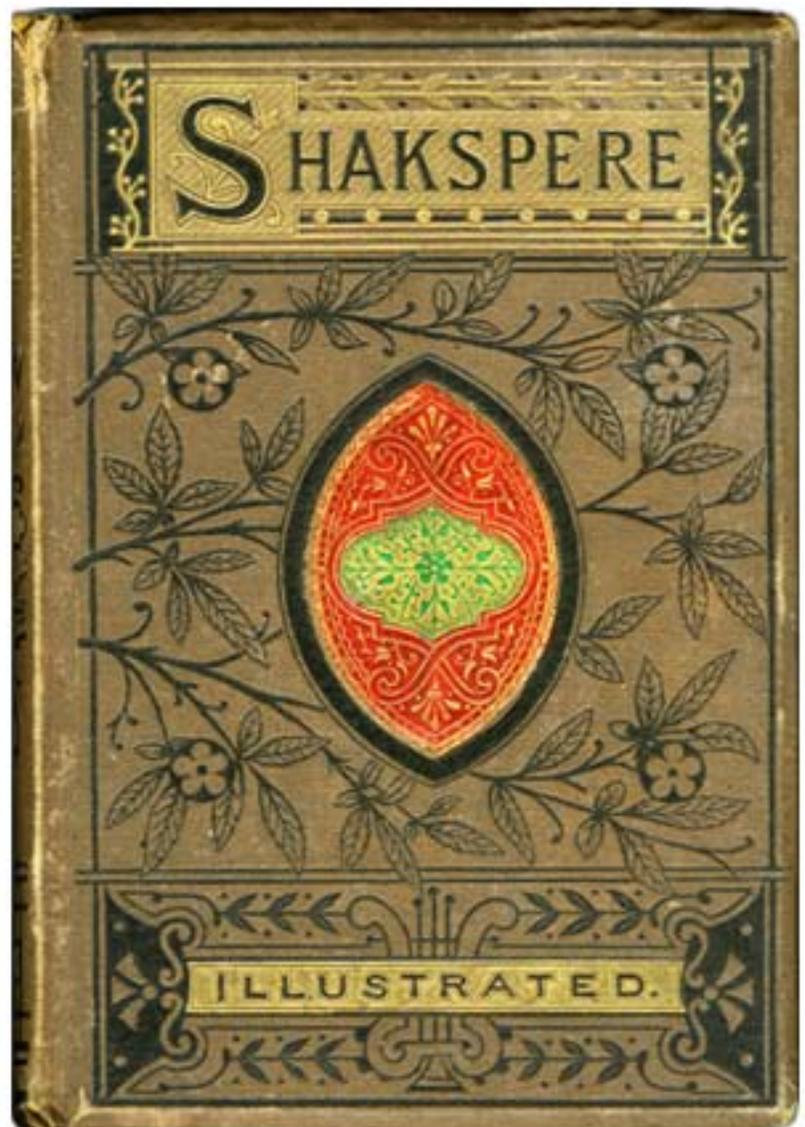
The Bard on film

New Moon

Eternal love

Life in Jazz

Wajdi Cherif



*Plus: Dear Barb, Sister Aurora,
From Where I Sit, and much more ...*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.



Re: "In Conversation With: Christos Stassinopoulos" by Wanda Waterman
St. Louis, v18 i14 (2010-04-09)

I just wanted to say what a wonderful article on Christos! He is what us other musicians would call a "genuine, true-blooded musician"! I think sometimes creative people can lose sight of the gift that they have been given of expression and reading this article was a reminder to me and hopefully other people in the creative field . . . if you are lucky enough to be able to express your creativity, you must respect it and cherish it as if it were someone you love.

He clearly loves music, and she is soooooo lucky! Bravo Christos!

Peace and Action,

LaGaylia

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE (OLD) MOVIES

Christina M. Frey



Shakespeare on Screen, Part I

Many films, both older movies and modern productions, look to classic literature for inspiration. However, few authors have had more influence on the movie industry than William Shakespeare. Because his plays explore the complexities of human relationships, they have transitioned well to the world of cinema. In fact, since the dawn of the movie age, there have been over four hundred film adaptations of Shakespeare's tragedies, comedies, and histories—some largely faithful to the original plays, and others looser adaptations.

This April 23 marks the 446th anniversary of the Bard's birth. In his honour, the next two instalments of "Saturday Night At the (Old) Movies" will look at several popular film versions of Shakespearean plays. In this week's instalment, we'll focus on some of the older film renditions of the plays themselves, while next week's instalment will review those adaptations that offer a variation on the main story.

One of Shakespeare's best-known plays, *Romeo and Juliet*, is a tale that seems made for cinema. The young lovers from feuding families, and their passionate courtship and tragic end, have inspired filmmakers as early as the year 1900! A recommended classic film version of *Romeo and Juliet* is the 1936 one, starring Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard. It's an excellent combination of theatre and film; the acting is well-done, if theatrical, and the rich costuming and lavish sets make this film version of the tragedy a treat for the eyes.

Trivia: English majors will be intrigued to learn that William Strunk, Jr.—the Strunk who co-authored *The Elements of Style*—was employed (and credited) as a literary consultant to the film's production. Apparently, the producer told Strunk that his job was to "protect Shakespeare" from the film types!

By contrast, the sets and camerawork of 1968's *Romeo and Juliet*, helmed by director Franco Zeffirelli, are not quite so magnificent. What the film might lack in cinematography, however, it more than makes up for in passion. When casting, Zeffirelli took a gamble and cast two very young (Juliet is played by a 15-year-old!), unknown actors in the lead roles. The risk paid off; the youth and onscreen chemistry of this Romeo and Juliet truly bring home the tragedy of the ill-fated lovers. The use of chant and sacred music in much of the score is an excellent touch. Although Shakespeare's original language is used (and sometimes seems slightly beyond some of the young actors), the film is surprisingly modern. Even those less keen on Shakespearean tragedies will enjoy this masterpiece.

Trivia: The prologue and epilogue are voiced by legendary actor Laurence Olivier, who appeared in several of the most famous film versions of Shakespearean plays (including 1948's *Hamlet* and 1965's *Othello*) and numerous other films (*Wuthering Heights*, for example.)

A less tragic love story is *The Taming of the Shrew*, which follows the courtship of acid-tongued Katharina by a fortune-hunting young man, Petruchio. Aside from a silent film version from the early 1900s, the only film adaptation of the actual play is the 1967 version, starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Taylor

plays the rude and shrewish Katharina to perfection, and her chemistry with real-life husband Burton (Petruccio) makes sparks fly during the couple's onscreen spats. The costuming and supporting cast are also good, but Taylor and Burton definitely steal the show.

Trivia: Burton and Taylor invested \$1 million of their own funds into the film's production, and requested a share of the film's profits in lieu of a salary. *The Taming of the Shrew* went on to be a box office success.

Based on another romance-comedy, 1935's Oscar-winning *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is another good choice. The film won an Academy Award for Best Cinematography, and the work is truly excellent given the year it was produced. It's interesting to watch the way the cinematographer created moods through light patterns, reflections, mist, and clarity. The score, based on Mendelssohn's work, is also beautiful. Although some of the acting seems a little forced, young Mickey Rooney's manic interpretation of Puck is particularly well-done.

Trivia: Although the cinematographer was given an Academy Award for his work on this film, he had not been nominated but was a write-in candidate. It was after this win that the Academy stopped permitting write-in votes during the awards.

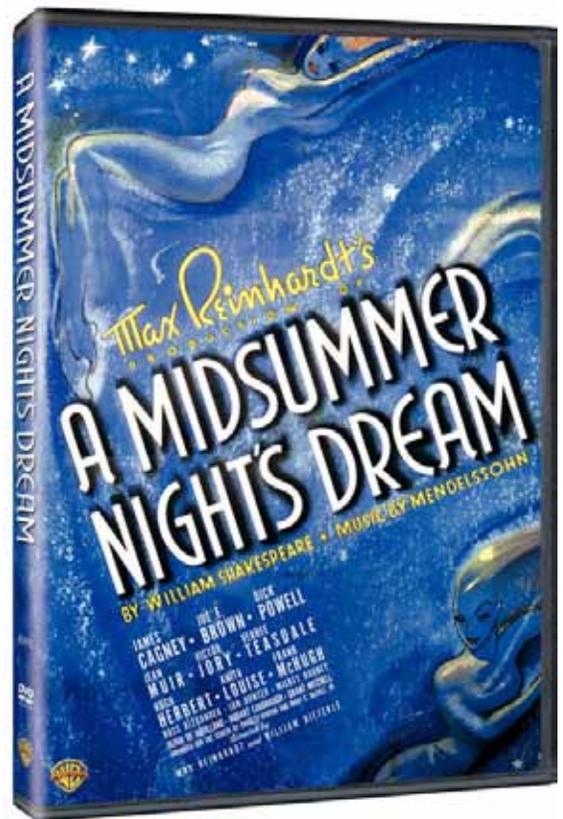
Shakespeare's historically based plays also translated well to cinema. 1953's *Julius Caesar* has a star-studded cast with good acting from the principals, and won an Academy Award for its art direction (and was nominated for its cinematography). The camerawork, lighting, and soundtrack enhance the mood of the play, and Marc Antony's oration is particularly memorable.

Trivia: You may recognize several of the actors: Marlon Brando (*A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Godfather*) was nominated for an Oscar for his passionate portrayal of Marc Antony; and Deborah Kerr (*From Here to Eternity*, *An Affair to Remember*) plays a stirring Portia.

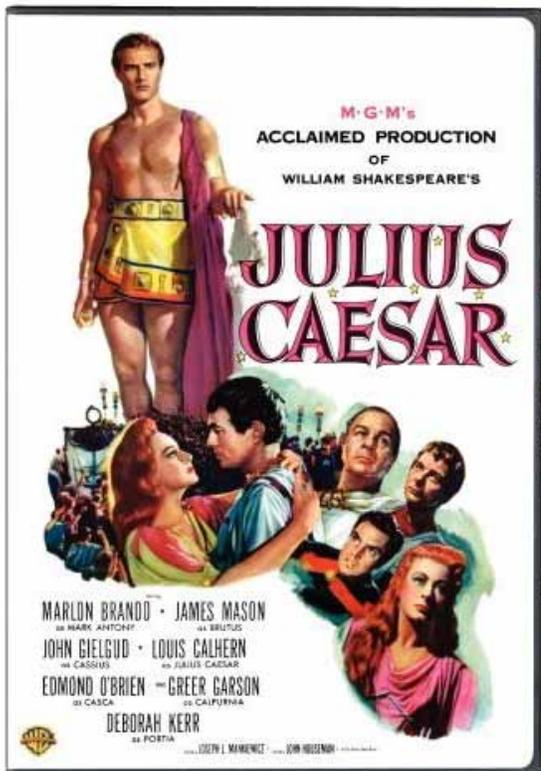
One of the most stunning Shakespearean film adaptations is surely legendary director Orson Welles' *Othello: The Moor of Venice* (1952). The film begins in a similar manner to Welles' acclaimed *Citizen Kane*: by playing the film's final scene. As the story unfolds, viewers see how the various characters came to arrive at their respective fates. Although the film has removed some of Shakespeare's original dialogue in favour of voice-overs, the character development and changing moods are not affected; Welles, through use of light, camerawork, and particularly the musical score and audio effects, does a masterful job of conveying the sense of this Shakespearean play.

Trivia: The production was plagued by financial woes. After one of the film's backers went bankrupt, filming ground to a halt and was completed piecemeal over the next few years as Welles earned enough personal cash to continue with the project.

Many other groundbreaking directors tackled classic Shakespeare at some point during their careers. Fans of Roman Polanski's work will appreciate his cynical 1971 take on *Macbeth*. Although Shakespearean scholars have decried the changes he introduced (for example, the character of Lady Macbeth starts out much



younger and much more innocent than she has traditionally been played), and in particular the film's altered ending, Polanski's choice to focus on the psychological impact of the Macbeths' actions is effective. The visual imagery and sound effects particularly underscore the rise and fall of the Macbeths' ambition and sanity. (Note: graphic and disturbing in parts, this is not a film for children!)



Trivia: *Macbeth* was the first movie Polanski directed after the murder of his wife and friends by members of the Manson family; some critics believe that the bleakness and gore present in the film reflect Polanski's own depression and pessimism.

Finally, one of the most acclaimed Shakespearean film productions is 1948's *Hamlet*, directed by actor Laurence Olivier and starring Olivier himself in the title role. Literary purists often object to the removal of much dialogue (the original play takes over four hours, whereas the movie clocks in around two) and the deletion of some of the characters and subplots. However, Olivier chose to focus his version of the play on Hamlet's psychological turmoil, and the result has largely been lauded by critics, scoring several Academy Awards (including Best Picture).

Trivia: Oddly, the actress playing Hamlet's mother was only 28 years old; Laurence Olivier, playing Hamlet, was 41.

In next week's instalment, we'll take a more relaxed approach to the Bard's work and look at films inspired by Shakespearean plays. In the meantime, try to find some of the older interpretations of Shakespeare on film; you'll be amazed just

how watchable these four-hundred-year-old plays can really be! Happy watching!

When she's not watching old movies, Christina M. Frey can be found blogging about kids and media at [Woozles and Heffalumps](#).

DID YOU KNOW?



New Look for AU Library Site

The AU library is one of the most popular services with students, and it's about to get even better. On March 15 the library launched a new interface for their online catalogue, and the beta version has been available to users since February.

The fresh new homepage is easy to navigate with links to all the resources you need, including a list of new library materials.

And don't forget to check out the [Web 2.0 link](#), where you'll find things like AirPAC, which lets you search the AU library catalogue from a wireless device; the AU library Facebook group; Zotero, a Firefox extension to help you "collect, manage, and cite your research sources"; and much more.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Christos Stassinopoulos, Part II

Christos Stassinopoulos is a Greek tenor opera singer and actor with a distinguished career in theatre, television, radio, and film. The Walt Disney Company selected him as the voice of Aladdin in the Greek dubbed version of the animated movie and its sequels and as the dubbed voices for Tweedledum and Tweedledee in Alice in Wonderland. He is also the Greek voice of Aladdin in the television series.

Selections from his latest work, Four Centuries of Songs, (not yet available for distribution) can be heard on his website, [MySpace page](#), and [YouTube channel](#). The songs were selected from a number of cultural epochs from the Renaissance until today and are stunning examples of an astonishing natural gift honed by excellent training and an artistic sensibility at once earthy and refined. Recently Christos took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about religion, favourite singers, and artistic self-care.

The Care and Feeding of a Tenor Voice

Honestly I do nothing! I drink cold water even in winter, and I don't consume egg yolks.

I do train consistently with my vocal teacher twice a week and I also rehearse with my pianist twice a week.

When I sing I strive to honour the composer, to serve the style of the various eras of music with no operatic mannerisms or vocal vanity, and above all to touch even one listener's heart and take him or her on my trip to that other dimension.

Favourite Singers

Maria Callas, Giulietta Simionato, Teresa Stratas, Markella Hatziano, Beniamino Gigli, Jussi Björling, Giuseppe di Stefano, Franco Corelli, Birgit Nilsson, Nat King Cole, Mahalia Jackson, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Mercedes Sosa, Sergio Endrigo, Fleury Dadonaki, Dulce Pontes, Sade, Lisa Gerrard, just to mention very few . . .

Inspiring Cultural Fodder

The live recording of Maria Callas's performance as Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* at La Scala in

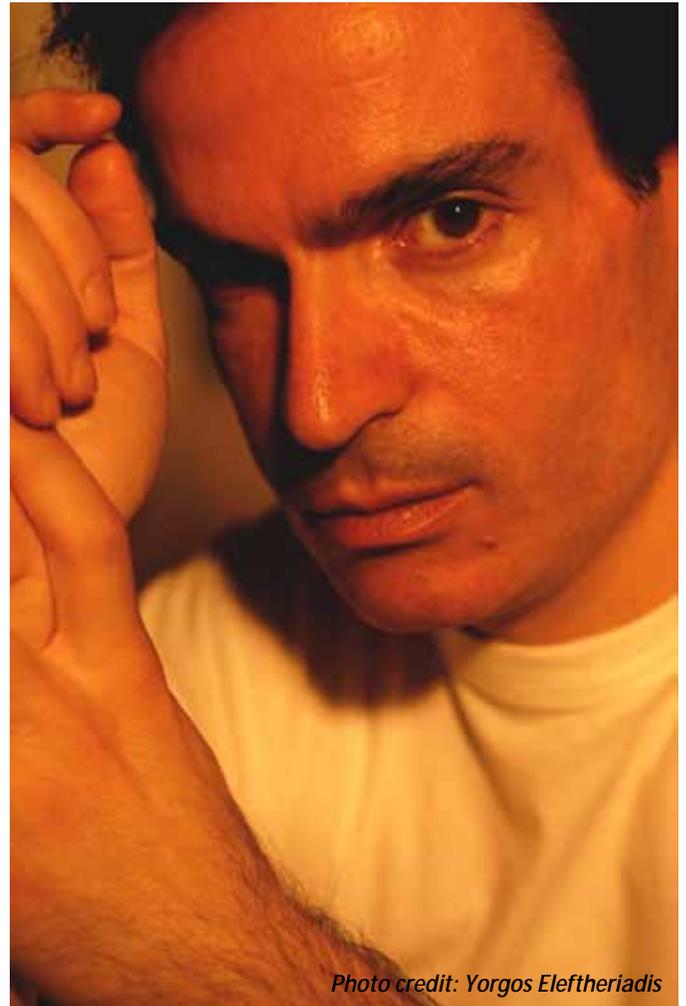


Photo credit: Yorgos Eleftheriadis

January 1954 under Herbert von Karajan (the first complete opera recording I ever listened to, when I was just 10 years old); Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's book *The Little Prince*; Victor Fleming's film *The Wizard of Oz*; Peter Schreier's live recording of Schubert's *Winterreise* accompanied by Sviatoslav Richter, 1985; David Llewelyn Wark Griffith's film *Intolerance*; Thomas Mann's novella *Death in Venice*; Luchino Visconti's film *Death in Venice*; Ludwig van Beethoven's *Letters*; Manos Hadjidakis's album *Gioconda's Smile*; and Felix Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* (Songs without Words) performed by Daniel Barenboim (one of my most favourite musical works).

Ideal Conditions for Creativity

Greece is not really a good place to develop an artistic career; the horizons are narrow for the kind of music I serve. There are limited opportunities for concerts, rare opportunities for opera performances, no opportunities for musical theatre, and no opportunities at all in the local record industry.

I've never had the chance to experience any ideal conditions, so I can't say for sure what ideal conditions for creativity would be. The only certain thing I can say is that music has always been my small window to light even during the darkest moments of my life.

On Belief

I'm an agnostic, not at all religious. For thousands of years religion and politics have been tools in the hands of rulers to manipulate the people, causing endless pain, segregation, and loss.

I strongly believe in humanism, tolerance, individual free will, respect for one's neighbour, acceptance of diversity, multiculturalism, and progressive thinking. My social conscience affects all my choices and my stand on life.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Glee Songs

April 13 marked the return of the sleeper hit *Glee*. It's one of those rare TV shows that deserves the praise heaped on it, and this week we take a look at the inspiration behind all those tunes. Because sometimes, you just can't beat the original.

Somebody to Love - This might be one of the most recognizable tunes from the *Glee* soundtracks, but *nobody* does it like Freddie Mercury, Brian May, John Deacon, and Roger Taylor. Otherwise known as Queen.

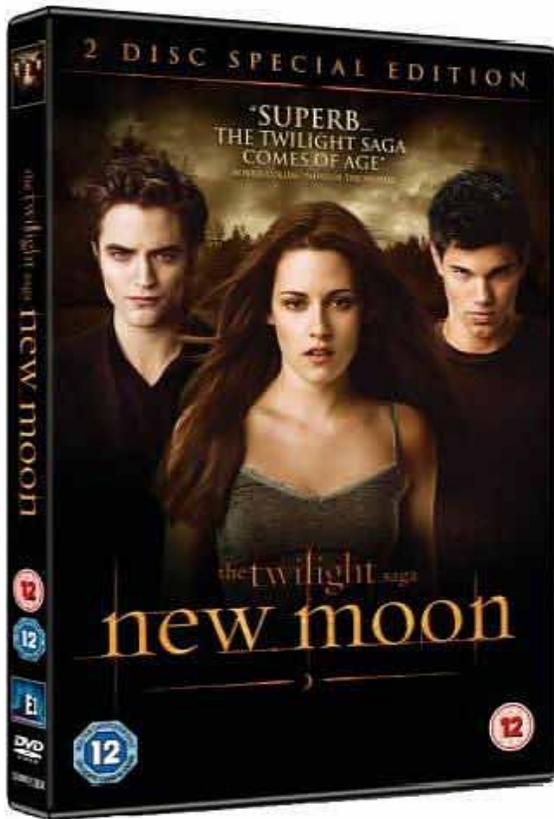
Push It - Yes, the '80s had bad hair, leg warmers, and way too much spandex. But the decade also had some catchy songs, including this one. If you can handle the dubious mix of harem pants and spandex, you'll probably enjoy this official music video by Salt-n-Pepa.

Lean on Me - Bill Withers wrote this song, but some people may be more familiar with the endless cover versions of the tune, by artists as diverse as Michael Bolton, Club Nouveau, and Sheryl Crow. If you've forgotten how good the original is (or you've never heard it), feast your ears.

Leaving on a Jet Plane - John Denver wrote this song, but perhaps the best known cover is by Peter, Paul and Mary. This clip doesn't boast much as far as visuals go. But it's not really about that, is it?

ON FILM

Diane Gadoua



New Moon

New Moon, the latest release in the *Twilight* franchise, has a lot to say about eternity—and not just when it comes to vampires.

If you're already a fan of the books and films, you probably know the characters, plotlines, and catchphrases intimately. And if you're not, the film is still enlightening for what it says about the eternal human need to make sense of the world through stories.

Before we get to the Shakespearean allusions (of which there are many), let's be clear about one thing. *New Moon* doesn't do subtle. Baz Luhrmann's nuanced *Romeo and Juliet* it definitely is not.

What it *does* do, however, is go straight for the jugular of its main demographic: young teens, the age group for whom much of life is about extremes. Emotions are heightened, physical changes can seem overwhelming, and even the smallest social gaffe can feel like a life-and-death dilemma. (Before adult fans howl in protest, bear in mind that the novels are published by

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.)

New Moon opens with heroine Bella Swan quoting Shakespeare's Friar Lawrence: "These violent delights have violent ends / And in their triumph die, like fire and powder / Which, as they kiss, consume."

Much like the famous play it references so often, *New Moon's* themes are both universal and eternal. Girl meets boy, true love blossoms, and powerful forces intervene to keep them apart. As one half of this particular star-crossed romantic duo, Bella's in a constant state of angst over forbidden love Edward Cullen. But unlike Juliet, Bella's problem isn't feuding families in Verona. It's the fact that Edward is a vampire.

The conflict was set in the first film, *Twilight*. Edward is irresistibly drawn to Bella but, as the bad-boy-hero archetype, he denies his feelings in a bid to protect the heroine's innocence. Giving in wouldn't just mean breaking curfew at the soda shop. If Edward succumbed to his urges, he would turn Bella into a vampire.

New Moon draws out that tension when a minor accident emphasizes the danger of Bella's relationship with Edward. To protect her, Edward and his family leave town. By vampire standards they're a pretty peace-loving bunch, but as Bella pines for Edward some far more sinister vampires turn up. They're seeking revenge on Edward and, since he's not around, decide that killing Bella will inflict a suitable amount of pain on him.

Blood feuds between vampires aren't really the main attraction here though. Instead, it's another universal dramatic element: the love triangle. Taylor Lautner plays Bella's friend Jacob Black, a faithful ally who's there to pick up the pieces of her broken heart. And while Jacob is clearly in love with her, he's also got a secret that rivals Edward's. Jacob is a werewolf.

If you're getting the sense that *New Moon* deals in well-worn dramatic themes, you'd be right. And in principle, there's nothing wrong with that. They're some of the most enduring plots for film and literature for a reason—they speak directly to and about the human condition.

But don't mistake *New Moon* for a complex exploration of love, rivalry, or temptation. Its colours are painted in bold, straightforward strokes. The good guys are clearly good and the bad guys are just as plainly bad. And that is both the film's strength and its weakness.

On the positive side, creating such unambiguous characters and plot development plays straight to the intended demographic. The *Twilight* franchise isn't really part of the horror genre, despite the abundance of werewolves and vampires. The books and films are all about teen romance—grand, dizzying, dramatic first love. And much like the mainstream romance novels that hold such enduring appeal, it relies on a tried and true formula that satisfies audiences by the millions.

For the most part, the actors manage well within those restrictions. Robert Pattinson (as Edward Cullen) looks suitably moody and conflicted, and it's clear that he could deliver the goods in a more challenging role. He did a fine job as Cedric Diggory in the *Harry Potter* films, and it actually makes for an interesting comparison to watch the trailers that are out for his next major role, *Remember Me*, in which he gets to chew the scenery with old pros like Pierce Brosnan and Lena Olin.

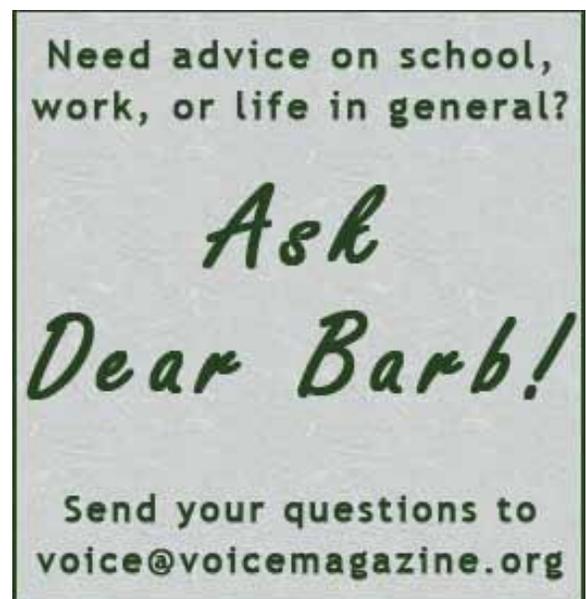
And Taylor Lautner provides a surprisingly appealing performance as the werewolf Jacob Black. I say surprisingly because, let's face it, the focus of the franchise is the romantic tension between Edward and Bella. In another actor's hands, the character of Jacob might have remained incidental. He's the third wheel in the love triangle, the second fiddle to the leading man, and the guy that Bella blatantly uses as a way to get closer to her true love (she hangs out with Jacob so he'll fix a dirt bike for her, a necessary danger factor that helps her conjure up visions of Edward).

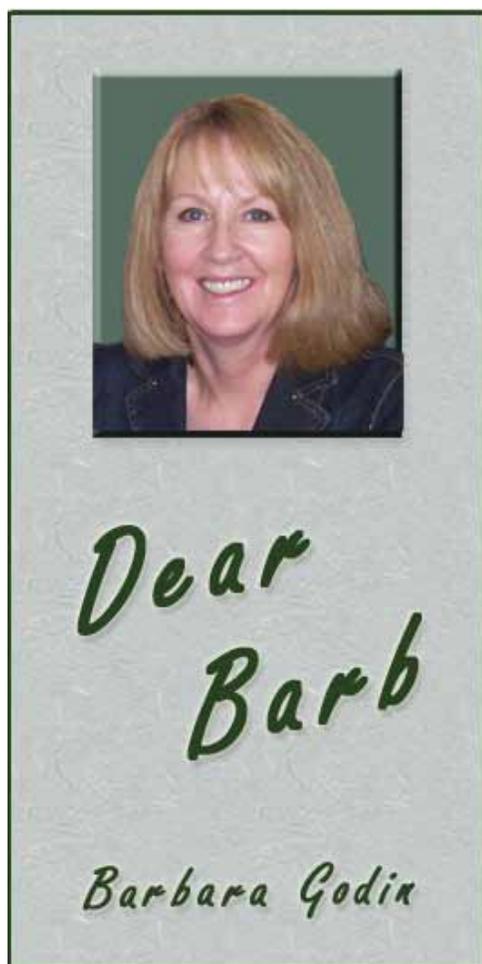
Yet Jacob is the most likeable of the three. He's as conflicted as Edward (having just been turned into a werewolf), but he's also a warm, genuine, fully rounded character, one that you'll likely find yourself relating to more than any other in the film. And given the blunt-edged approach of the novels, that's a definite testament to Taylor Lautner's abilities.

In fact, you may even find yourself rooting for him to get the girl—but that's where the downside of the simplistic approach comes in, because Kristen Stewart's portrayal of Bella is, quite frankly, deader than a vampire.

Sure, she's supposed to be depressed and lovelorn. But it's possible to convey intense emotions without grand gestures (think the wonderfully talented Anna Paquin in *The Piano*—she was only around 12 at the time, and it's as brooding and melancholy a film as any). When you find yourself watching Bella's face for *any* signs of emotion, you have to wonder if she's already a member of Edward's soulless vampire clan after all.

That won't matter to committed *Twilight* fans though. And with great production values, spooky settings, and a particularly charming werewolf, *New Moon* has plenty of other attractions to sink your teeth into.





Don't Expect Everyone to Grieve the Same Way

Dear Barb:

I am in my early twenties and have been having a hard time since my mother died. She was diagnosed with breast cancer about 10 years ago and went through treatment. Fortunately she was well for a long time. All of a sudden the cancer came back and the doctor said there was nothing more they could do for her. Even though our family had lived with the possibility of this happening, I guess I never really thought it would end like this.

My dad seems to be coping better than anybody else. In fact, it has only been nine months since mom died and he's already been on a date with another woman. I find it tough to see him with another woman. I just don't think I will ever be able to get over this grief. I can't stop thinking of all the things I will miss with my mother, like my wedding, my children. I really need some advice. Thanks.

Nancy

Hi, Nancy. Losing a parent at such a young age can be very traumatic. No matter what the circumstances we can never be totally prepared to lose someone. On the other hand, as our parents age we seem to have more time to adjust to the inevitable.

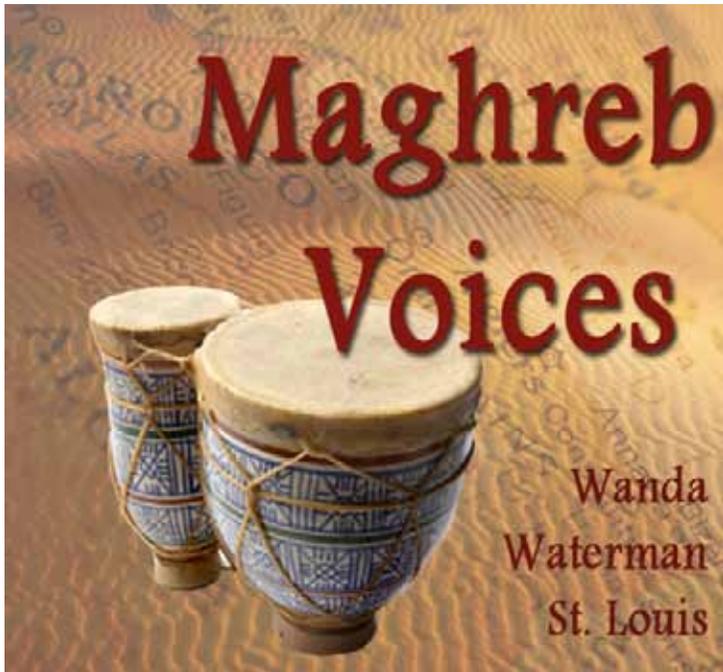
Even though you and your family were living with your mother's cancer, she was able to survive for quite a while and as you say seemed to be well. Therefore it would be easy to convince yourself she was going to beat it.

Perhaps because you were so young when your mother became ill you didn't fully understand her prognosis, whereas your father was probably more involved with her treatment and subsequently more aware of what was happening. I know it bothers you to see your father with someone else, but do you think your mother would have wanted him to be alone for the rest of his life? Probably not.

Grief is very personal and people experience it in unique ways. You need to give yourself time to heal. Your mother will always be with you, as you are a part of each other. Sometimes it helps to speak to others who have experienced similar circumstances. Therefore I would suggest you talk with your family doctor about joining a support group in your area, or perhaps see a grief counsellor.

Try to remember the good times you shared with your mother. I know this is going to sound like a cliché but time heals all wounds—it really does!

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.



Tunisian Jazz Pianist and Composer Wajdi Cherif, Part I

A Sweet Newness in the Exchange of Musical Traditions

Wajdi Cherif, *Fuzzy Colours*

2009, Wech Records

Wajdi Cherif, *Jasmine*

2006, Wech Records

"Jazz means working things out musically with other people. You have to listen to other musicians and play with them even if you don't agree with what they're playing. It teaches you the very opposite of racism and anti-Semitism. It teaches you that the world is big enough to

accommodate us all."

Wynton Marsalis

"The thing that is making jazz healthy today is that people are coming out of other backgrounds, from rock, folk, from ethnic music. It's changing the music, and for the better."

Billy Taylor

Once again cynics are arguing that jazz is dead as doornails, backing their claims with lagging record sales and the decades-long marginalization of a genre that once filled the dance halls, airwaves, and film studios. They trace the beginnings of jazz's demise to the increased intellectualization that began in the late '50s with Coltrane and Davis, and refer to fusion and other modern adaptations as rare flashes in the pan, incapable of reviving jazz's importance as a cultural idiom.

But there are some very cogent arguments on the other side. Sure, jazz has moved from a mainstream popular musical form to being the subject of intense adulation of those elite few with the capacity to appreciate it.

Is that so bad? Think back, those of you who can, and remember all the caramel-coated fluff that was passed off as jazz when jazz was practically all there was to listen to. Do you really want to go back to those days? Or would you rather take your pick of whatever brilliant, well-trained, focused creative geniuses happen to emerge this year?

Wajdi Cherif, for example. Cherif's music is a seamless blend of jazz, Western classical, and Arabic influences, his tunes as true to the Western classical tradition as they are original, maintaining the pure elegance of the best jazz while adding a necessary component, essential not only to the vitality of jazz but also to its ongoing existence: the influence of other cultures, in this case the musical genres of Cherif's native Tunisia.

There is a full spectrum of emotion in the tracks on *Jasmine*, radiating sadness, warmth, a gentle and loving reassurance, tenderness, and wistfulness, with a very relaxed ambience in spite of quick, driving polyrhythms.

The Arabic influence and instrumentation is a little more salient on *Jasmine* than on *Fuzzy Colours*, with the oud and the percussion instruments granting a delicious texture to the improvisations, but in *Fuzzy Colours* (which also incorporates Latin sounds) Cherif has incorporated Arabic modes into his compositions and has revived, as is the wont of many Maghreb and Maghreb-influenced players, tunes penned eons ago by jazz greats like Gillespie ("A Night in Tunisia"), Juan Tizol ("Caravan"), and Miles Davis ("Nardis"), highlighting his awareness of the natural understanding that Arabic music shares with jazz.

Fuzzy Colours has brought remarkably lively interpretations to these standards and Cherif's own compositions have beautiful melody lines and an innovative élan while sitting squarely within the jazz tradition.

There is a beautiful call and response between past and present with this kind of swap (guitarist [Jan Wouter Oostenrijk](#) is another prime example), when the new Arabic-influenced jazz

players play these old jazz renditions of Arabic melodies, tunes that may seem quaint today in comparison with the sophisticated maqams and rhythms now being introduced by these same musicians, who nonetheless make humble bows to the great composers of the past before climbing onto their shoulders.

To be continued . . .

Maghreb Voices celebrates the art, culture, and struggles of the peoples of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, in northern Africa.





*From
Where
I Sit*
Hazel Anaka

Not in the Cards

Some days—okay, maybe quite a few days—this past winter stretched out before me like rich, perfect bolts of silk. They were pristine and pure except for the tiny, nubby blemishes inherent in any natural fibre. Just as every day begins with promise and opportunity.

The usual encroachments to this chunk of time are built-in responsibilities like food prep, eating, and sleeping. Depending on your age and stage of life it may also include earning a living, child or elder care, and commitments to others. If you are un- or underemployed, a good part of each day may be devoted to hustling some work and/or worrying.

It would be nice to report that I embraced those empty days as precious gifts. Or that I wrung all the opportunity out of them by tackling neglected projects or beginning new ones in a blaze of activity. It would be nice but it wouldn't be true or the whole story. Time is a slippery little thing that drips through our clenched fingers. Experts advise us to organize it and manage it and whip it into submission because that will make us productive and efficient and whole. Easier said than done, in my experience.

And now the craziness has begun. I've taken on a part-time job as event coordinator for the fifth annual Doors Open event in our county. I've spent more time on the phone in the last week than in the previous month. With documents to revise and update, calls and emails to send and receive, promotional and organizational devices to design, I'm one busy girl.

Add to that the planning and execution of Roy's upcoming milestone birthday on the first Saturday in May. We've booked a country hall, invited friends and relatives, and are fine-tuning the shopping list and menu with Ukrainian favourites.

The following weekend I'm "goin' to Winnipeg" for training to become a certified funeral celebrant. In the meantime, I'm reading about death and grief and designing the brochure, press release, and other materials to launch this new service. It should mesh nicely with my role as a marriage

commissioner. Yesterday I booked two more ceremonies as wedding season approaches. Every booking means a planning meeting with the couple and the creation of a personalized ceremony.

I've also committed to taking part in a family garage sale over two separate weekends. The fact I love the process doesn't make it any less work.

And did I mention my regular shift at the public library and a special board meeting with a representative from the Libraries' Branch? Plus writing my weekly column for you, dear reader. And don't get me started on spring seeding and garden cleanup. Or the fact I'm on a committee to distribute grant money to deserving community proposals. The fun continues into June with a week in Edmonton at the Women's Words writing program and another week unwinding at a resort in Canmore.

Staying in pyjamas with an afghan, a good book, and silence isn't in the cards anytime soon, from where I sit.

Sister Aurora

There's a rainbow dancing in the sky tonight, and I think I'm gonna go outside...



AUSU UPDATE



Annual General Meeting – Your Say about Our Way

AUSU will be holding it's annual general meeting on Tuesday, April 6th, at 5:00pm MST by teleconference, free to you from around the globe. There is one planned change to the bylaws as well as the presentation of the annual report that tells you where AUSU is and some of the things that may be in store for the future. The AGM is where AUSU can change its Bylaws, and last year several changes to the Bylaws were brought from the floor. Since our Bylaws define, among other things, who is a member and how much money the *Voice* receives, these are things that definitely concern you. We hope to see you there!

AUSU Election!

As you've probably already seen on our front page, the AUSU Election became an AUSU Acclamation, because only nine eligible members ran for seats. Out of those nine, only eight were accepted by the membership to sit on Council. Those eight are:

- Ashley Seely
- Barb Rielly
- Bethany Tynes
- Joel Benitez
- John Palmer
- Kim Newsome
- Sarah Kertcher
- Toni Fox

They will be taking office officially as of April 14th, so wish them luck and let them know what issues are important to you!

New 2010 AUSU Handbook/Planners – Arrived!

Finally! People have already started receiving the new planners in the mail, and we're currently shipping them out as fast as the orders come in. Full of useful information about AUSU, writing styles, course grading, great finds online for your studies that you may not have known about, as well as having places to write down your phone numbers, keep track of your assignments, and, oh yeah, a year's worth of calendar to plan out your schedule too. We'll give one free to each AUSU member just for the asking.

Remember, though, we only print a limited number of these each year, so when they're gone, they're gone.

Let 'em Know who Represents for You!

AUSU logo mugs, hoodies, USB keys, and much more are all available for sale from our office. Also, used locks can be purchased at half price! Check out our merchandise catalog on our front page. You should check out our hoodies in particular—made in Canada and 100% bamboo, we're offering them for just barely over our cost, and they're both durable and comfortable.

And if you have new little ones in your family, or know somebody who does, check out our baby onesies. Made by American Apparel, these onesies are high quality and let folks know your kids are growing up to great things as a "Future Graduate of Athabasca U"

AUSU Scheduling Meeting with Tutors' Union – Not really an Update

Some things resist change. We're still waiting for a response from the Tutor's Union as to when we might be able to meet with them to discuss ways that AUSU and the Tutor's Union can work together to ensure that students are getting the contact they need. Unfortunately, they haven't yet replied, so we're stepping up our campaign to get in touch with them. If you want to help, the next time you're talking to your tutor, ask them if they know when the Tutor's Union will meet with AUSU so that the groups can work together on common issues.

Our statistics we've been collecting from the forums and your calls show that issues with tutors - specifically the amount of time taken for marking assignments and exams are your number one concern. Help us help you.

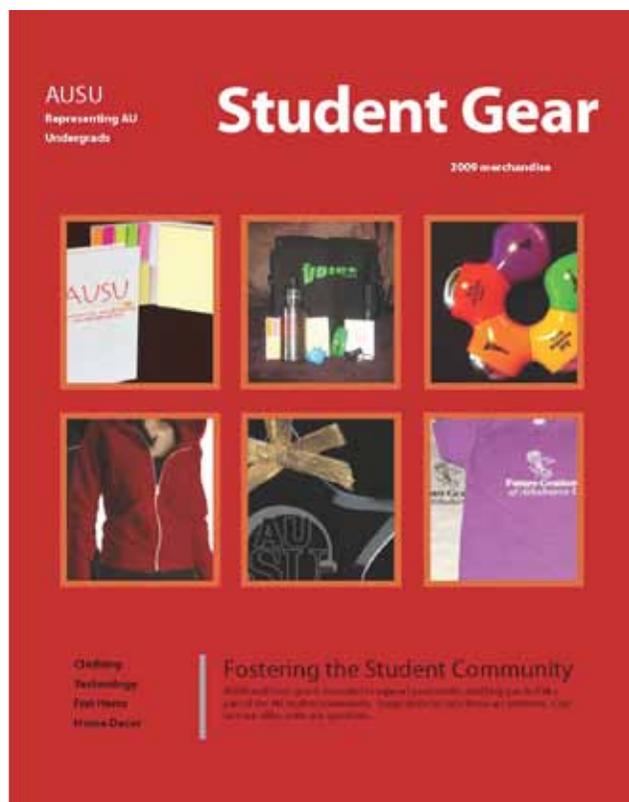
SmartDraw Program Renewal

Some of you who took advantage of our program to provide SmartDraw software to members have been getting notifications that your software license will soon be expiring. Fortunately, AUSU will be continuing this program, so if you haven't already, go to the AUSU home page to download the newest version.

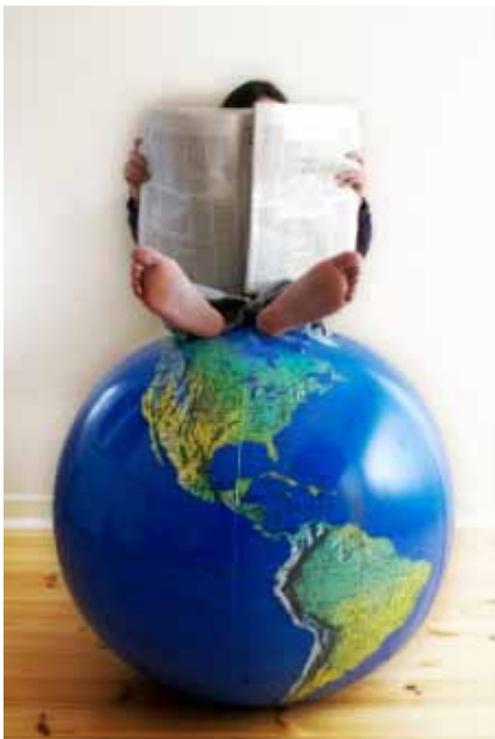
SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo. Just a few of the graphics you can make include Venn diagrams, genetics charts, graphs, organizational and flow charts, and Gantt charts.

For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

Remember, though, that you should always check with your tutor to find out if there is a specific format he or she prefers. Your tutor does not have to have SmartDraw to view these graphics, however. Installations under this program are good for one year. The package includes both the Standard and Health Care editions of SmartDraw.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Alberta bill targets distracted drivers

When someone mentions the words “distracted driving,” cell phones and electronic gadgets usually spring to mind. But there are plenty of other bad habits that take drivers’ minds off the road, and a proposed Alberta bill takes aim at them too.

Bill 16, introduced by a Calgary MLA, would follow the lead of four other provinces where using handheld phones behind the wheel is against the law. And as the [CBC](#) reports, the proposed legislation would prohibit driving distractions like personal grooming as well.

The usual culprits would be banned, such as “using hand-held devices that can transfer phone calls, email or text messages.” Some electronic toys, like hand-held audio or music players, would be allowed as long as drivers aren’t “manually programming” them while on the road.

And incredible as it may seem, drivers engage in so many other distractions behind the wheel that legislators felt compelled to include them—things like writing, drawing, and sketching!

Personal grooming while driving is included in that list, probably no surprise to those who’ve skirted drivers shaving, putting on makeup, or curling their hair behind the wheel. The proposed bill would not affect emergency responders, and two-way radios and hands-free phones would still be allowed for “commercial and search-and-rescue purposes.”

In Foreign News: US law aims to stop thieves using fake caller IDs

There are plenty of scams on the Internet, but people should be aware of digital thieves using phones as well. A common scam involves using fake caller IDs to trick people into revealing credit card or bank account numbers—and a new US law would make fake caller IDs illegal.

As [The New York Times](#) reports, the bill passed the House in a voice vote on April 14 and would ban the practice of faking caller IDs “with the intent of tricking people into revealing personal information or otherwise causing harm.” Technology has made it relatively “cheap and easy” for thieves to alter the information that shows up on a phone’s call display. Call recipients could see the name of their bank or other trusted organization and be tricked into giving out Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, and even passwords.

The practice is known as spoofing, and it’s being used for more than financial gain. In some cases, political candidates have altered the caller ID to appear as a rival’s to mislead voters. One of the bill’s chief sponsors, Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., told reporters that in one case, an identity-theft ring altered caller IDs to bilk over \$15 million from unsuspecting victims.

Altering caller IDs would only be illegal “when the intent is to deceive and harm the recipient of the call.” However, it would still be permitted in cases such as domestic abuse shelters changing display information to protect their residents.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

THE VOICE

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