

Weekly TV Picks

by DANIEL J. ENGLER

All times Eastern

SUNDAY, FEB. 19

Journey Home Roundtable
EWTN, 10 p.m.

Host Marcus Grodi interviews William Bales, Scott Hahn and Kenneth Howell, all converts to Catholicism from Presbyterianism and the Reformed movement. They discuss Catholic and Protestant theology, worship and practices.

MONDAY, FEB. 20

American Experience: Reconstruction
PBS, 9 p.m.

This two-part, 90-minute program gives us a thorough look at the Union's governance of the defeated Confederate states from 1863-1877, during and after the Civil War. The North regarded the arrangement as an exercise in interracial self-government and social justice, but many Southerners considered it unjust and dictatorial.

MONDAY, FEB. 20

Digging for the Truth: Roanoke
History Channel, 9 p.m.

Founded in 1587, the English colony of Roanoke, in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, consisted of 90 men, 17 women and nine children. In 1590, an English expedition found no trace of them except for one mysterious carved word, "Crotan." For years, English and Spanish forces tried but failed to solve the disappearance.

TUESDAY, FEB. 21

Nova: The Lost Particle
PBS, 8 p.m.

This program tells the story of the seven-decade hunt for the neutrino, the subatomic particle whose existence Wolfgang Pauli posited in 1930.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 22

Classroom: George Washington
A&E, 7 a.m.

Celebrate Washington's birthday by watching this biography of the man whose patriotism, leadership and integrity made him the "Father of Our Country."

THURSDAY, FEB. 23

Life on the Rock
EWTN, 8 p.m.

Guest Angelo "Lino" Rulli Jr., a young veteran of Catholic radio and TV, mixes solid theology and humor to give people "a better understanding of the faith." His topic tonight is "The New Evangelization: New in Ardor, Methods & Expressions."

FRIDAY, FEB. 24

Heroes Under Fire: Deadly Reckoning
History Channel, 10 p.m.

On May 15, 1975, 41 U.S. Air Force, Marine and other personnel gave their lives to retake the U.S. container ship Mayaguez and its crew after the Khmer Rouge captured the ship and anchored it off Koh Tang Island, Cambodia.

SATURDAY, FEB. 25

Modern Marvels: Candy
History Channel, 7 p.m.

This tour of candy-makers large and small (factories large and small, that is, not necessarily waistslines!) covers candy bars, boxed chocolates, jelly beans, saltwater taffy, licorice, old-fashioned candy and "gourmet" sweets. Advisory: TV-PG.

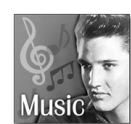
Dan Engler writes from Santa Barbara, Calif.



Valerie Von Fange and her producer at work in a Nashville studio. (Photo: valvonfange.com)

Full-Time Music for God, Who Never Sleeps

A conversation with Catholic singer-songwriter Valerie Von Fange



Valerie Von Fange is finally doing what she

always wanted to do.

After years in high-tech sales, marketing and education, she is making music full time. And making it for the greater glory of God.

by AMY SMITH

Last July the Huntly, Va.-based singer-songwriter released her second CD, "Steadfast Love," after recording in Nashville, Tenn. This latest project continued the themes of 1993's "Thy Kingdom Come," which she released after making a pilgrimage to Medjugorje.

Von Fange says her songs bring some fresh ideas to contemporary Christian music because they spotlight the teachings of the Catholic Church and stories of the saints. "Steadfast Love" touches on a variety of themes, from praising God and living for Christ to the simple joys of being a wife and mother. She spoke with Register correspondent Amy Smith.

How did you know God was calling you to pursue music as a ministry?

Music has been in my blood from the start. I started playing classical piano when I was 12. I wanted to major in music in college, but I thought I should do something more practical, so I majored in business. Music was always there, though, as a sideline most of my life, whether I was directing a choir or playing at different events. I thought, "Some day I can see doing this fulltime."

How does the Catholic faith drive and inspire your work?

Going to Medjugorje pushed me to learn more about the richness of the Catholic faith. Protestant friends asked me a lot of questions, so I did research to get answers for them. It seems my searching made me become more Catholic. The Church's truths are hard to dispute. I plugged all of that into my music, writing about themes like Our Lady and purgatory.

What is your main objective as a songwriter?

The main goal of my music is to share the fullness of Christ in an honest way, to talk about truths that might separate us Catholics from other Christians but that also might eventually bring us together, and to reinforce and reaffirm what Catholics already believe.

How do you approach songwriting?

A theme will hit me and won't go away, which is probably God telling me to pursue it. I see where I can get more information about the theme, reading a book or talking with someone deeply rooted in the faith.

I work on the words first. Once the words are out, I have more of a sense as to what the music should be like. I keep working until I get the song right.

I think it's important to run my music by other people, because they're the audience. I want to know what touches them. I come

from a musical family, so they give me their input. On this CD, I collaborated with my husband, Tom, as well as my brother, Joe.

What's the meaning behind the title "Steadfast Love"?

It refers to a way of loving that's deeper than society's "fluffy" love; it refers to God's agape love, which soothes and quenches the soul and leaves you so satisfied, like St. Teresa of Avila talked about. My hope is that people will continue to go down their prayer journey and truly feel God's abundant love.

How does this project differ from your first CD?

From a recording perspective, it's top-notch. When you go to Nashville, you get great quality. I recorded in the same studio where Amy Grant recorded. The people I worked with were great. They gave me a lot of leeway. It truly was my project.

For this CD, I wanted to branch out stylistically. I was trying for an eclectic mix. I love Latin music, especially the sounds of the Spanish guitar and congas played in "Missionary of Charity" and "Follow the Son." The song about St. Augustine has a bluegrass twist, featuring dobro, mandolin and fiddle. "Till Trouble Do Us Part" is a country ballad with steel guitar and mandolin.

Out here in Virginia there's an Irish-Catholic influence, so I wanted Celtic sounds (fiddle, accordion and pennywhistle) in the traditional hymn "Beautiful Savior."

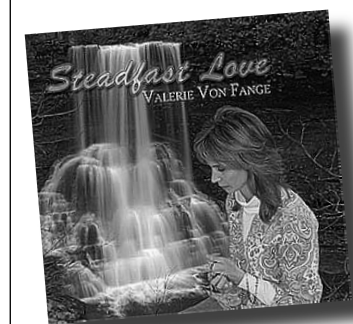
What message do you want listeners to take away from your music?

Seek God and his truth and his love more and more on a daily basis. In times of need, he is the first to go to. He gives our lives clarity and direction.

Amy Smith writes from Geneva, Illinois.

Information

(540) 660-2196
valvonfange.com



A hymn to Him
We sing our songs
Our songs of wonder
Our voices raised
He'll fill our souls
Our souls with thunder roar
Alleluia, the lowly shall rise
The last shall be first
Alleluia, we'll seek
His holiness
Let the water soothe our thirst

— from "A Hymn to Him"
by Valerie Von Fange

Video Picks & Passes

by STEVEN D. GREYDANUS



Recently released in a new DVD edition, 2002 Best Picture winner **Chicago** has been called a "cautionary tale," for no good reason I can see.

Not only do the guilty live happily ever after while the innocent go unrewarded and even (what's more) unadmired by the film, but the audience is expected to come away not shaken and challenged but humming "All That Jazz." Like *Moulin Rouge!* *Chicago* involves sordid goings-on in a rather seamy milieu. But where Lurman's film tried to contrast its dissolute ambience with heart-warming sincerity and idealism, *Chicago* is cynical to the core. There's no moral counterpoint, no character capable of putting the film's decadence and absurdity into perspective.

Why is *Chicago*'s black comedy distasteful while **Kind Hearts and Coronets** (new on DVD from Criterion) — the first, darkest and best of British Ealing Studios' acclaimed crime comedies — comes off as a cheerfully mean-spirited delight? Perhaps it's partly the outward gentility and sophistication of the British aristocracy that *Kind Hearts* gleefully satirizes, an ironic contrast to the story's underlying ruthlessness and moral decadence.

It's also a more enjoyable place to spend 100-plus minutes than the seamy world of *Chicago*, which wants to have its cake and eat it too, pandering to the very crassness it parodies.

Kind Hearts stars Dennis Price as a disgruntled distant heir to a peerage who decides to avenge his disinherited mother by murdering the eight ranking family members that stand between him and the title.

CHICAGO (2002)



KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS (1949)



YOUNG MR. LINCOLN (1939)



CONTENT ADVISORY:

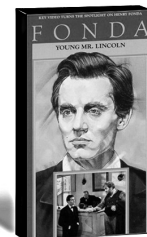
Chicago: Recurring sexual dialogue, lyrics, attire and choreography; illicit affairs including brief bedroom scenes (no nudity); brief violence; some profane and obscene language; general decadence. **Kind Hearts and Coronets:** Comic depiction of serial murder (teens and up). **Young Mr. Lincoln:** Brief violence; an offscreen murder (fine family viewing).

Young Mr. Lincoln is good wholesome Americana hokum, as only John Ford could deliver it.

In tour de force camcos, Alec Guinness plays all eight relatives, old and young, male and female. Another Ealing comedy, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, was chosen for the Vatican film list, perhaps partly because its subject was only theft, not murder. That's understandable, but while *Mob* is a classic, *Kind Hearts* is Ealing's masterpiece.

If that's still too dark for your tastes, try Henry Fonda in John Ford's **Young Mr. Lincoln** (also new from Criterion). Fonda's most familiar turn as a legendary historical character in a Ford film is of course as Wyatt Earp in *My Darling Clementine* — but he's far better cast here, and gives a more vivid performance. Rangy, folksy, slow-spoken and self-deprecating, Fonda embodies the young Honest Abe persona as comfortably and naturally as his frontier clothes. Lincoln's future as an orator is foreshadowed less by his performance in the murder trial with which the film's final act is taken up than by the jailhouse scene in which he stands down a mob bent on lynching two presumed murderers.

"We've gone to a heap of trouble not to have at least one hanging," one man objects. "Sure you have, Mac," Abe acknowledges. "Trouble is,



when men start takin' the law into their own hands, they're just as apt in all the confusion and fun to start hangin' somebody who's not a murderer as somebody who is ... [till] a man can't pass a tree or look at a rope without feeling uneasy. We seem to lose our heads in times like this. We do things together that we'd be mighty ashamed to do by ourselves."

It may be hokum, but *Young Mr. Lincoln* is good wholesome Americana hokum, as only John Ford could deliver it.

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