

Combining the Sacred & Profane

Threshold HouseBoys Choir
Peter Christopherson

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In the 1940 version of the film *The Thief of Bagdad*, there's a scene in which the teenage Sabu, playing the charming street-boy of the title, is wandering lost in the desert when he sees an ancient encampment materialise in front of him.



Sabu in *The Thief of Bagdad*

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Inside, the unsuspecting lad is welcomed as a Prince, and told that its inhabitants have been waiting two millennia for him to come. The white-bearded old King tells the boy he will inherit everything in his Kingdom, except for one thing – a magic carpet, which the old man is keeping to carry him to Paradise.

Sabu only wants to save his friend who is to be executed in Baghdad at any moment. So, with the old King watching knowingly from shadows, the lad plans to steal the carpet which will carry him there.

Before doing so, he prays to Allah:

'When the old King's hour comes, he won't want a carpet to fly to paradise... Then You, oh Allah, will take him by the hand, gentle and kind as he is, and lead him into eternal Bliss, Aren't I right? Oh Allah, Lord of Justice, let me steal, this one last time... Fly Carpet!'

Of course, the carpet lifts into the air and carries him off to save his friend in the nick of time.

The reason I mention this scene is because, in the space of a few short minutes, the storytellers have laid out the beliefs that have shaped my life's work. They are these:

1. That there are forces beyond the human, that take an interest in us, even on occasion, intervening to guide our lives...
2. That society's outcasts, thieves, deviants and prostitutes have as much access to these forces as the rest of us, probably more so. In other words, as you approach the edges of the 'bell curve' of what society considers 'acceptable', only then does the panoply of other worlds beyond this one start to come clearly into view and into reach....

[Though please remember to exercise care when leaning out over the Abyss – the railings round there are well dodgy!]

3. That an open heart, generosity of spirit, even Innocence – not in the Christian moral sense, but in the sense of freedom from an adult's cynicism, greed and 'sophistication' – really goes a long way, when it comes to asking for things from 'Them Upstairs'!

I live in Thailand, where I believe that for various reasons (both geographical and historical), the tissue that normally separates our everyday world from the other planes of existence is especially thin.

I can tell you from numerous experiences I have had in the last few years that the sight of Thai boy prostitutes (whether dark skinned, tattooed and scary or small and gentle-looking), going to the Temple to make offerings and pray sincerely for one's well-being is enough to tip me over the edge, into a kind of spiritual euphoria at least as strong as any drug I have ever taken (and there have been many), and longer lasting.

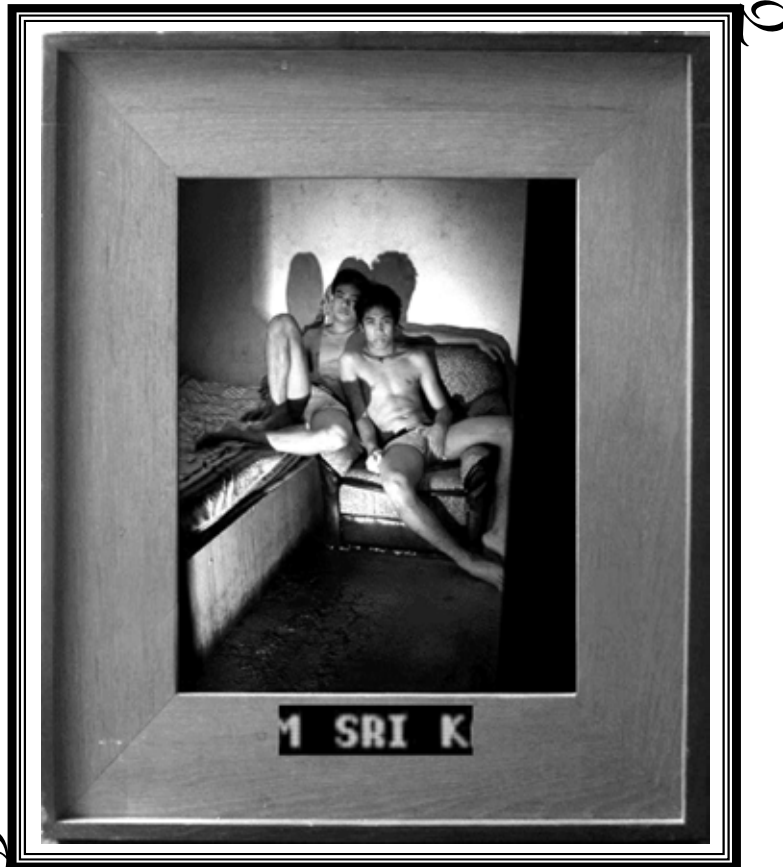
It may last forever, for all I know. I hope so. All this life at least.

It is this heady cocktail of both Sacred and Profane, shaken or stirred, that gets me every time.

We are all at our own points on the path to Nirvana. I accept that later I may lose interest in, or rise above, the cravings of earthly desire, or the obsession with Epicurean delights. However, for now I remain captivated by those kids whose wisdom and kindness belies their street level existence, their most ancient and intimate of professions, and their tender years (legal note: 18+ of course!)

It is the least I can do in my work, to try to send any Merit I may have accumulated, to them in return...

*The Threshold HouseBoys Choir
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www.sacred-profane.com*



Framed photograph of boy prostitutes with animated LED Buddhist Prayer light.
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