Community

The finalists of Stars of Science Season 11 urge people to vote for them with hopes of winning the title.

Community

The five-day-long Qatar International Art Festival concludes on a high note with award ceremony held for participating artists.

Community

The SME Digital Transformation of the Year award for Gulf Times Community at QDBA 2019 is an honour.

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COVER STORY

A new verve

The SME Digital Transformation of the Year award for Gulf Times Community at QDBA 2019 is an honour.

Review

An adaptation that misses promised mystical potential.

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Showbiz

Nigerian Oscar entry Lionheart disqualified for too much English.

Page 15
Playing with fire

DIRECTION: Andy Fickman
CAST: Judy Greer, Keegan-Michael Key, John Cena
SYNOPSIS: When straight-laced fire superintendent Jake Carson and his elite team of firefighters come to the rescue of three siblings, they quickly realize that no amount of training could prepare them for their most challenging job yet – babysitting. As their lives, jobs and depot get turned upside down, the three men soon learn that children – much like fires – are wild and unpredictable.

THEATRES: Royal Plaza, Landmark, The Mall

Ujda Chaman

DIRECTION: Abhishek Pathak, Danish Singh
CAST: Gagan Arora, Abhilash Chaudhary, Maanvi Gagroo
SYNOPSIS: The film revolves around a 30-year-old bachelor Chaman Kohli, a Hindi lecturer with premature balding and in quest of a beautiful wife.

THEATRES: Royal Plaza, Landmark, The Mall
Gems and Jewels Exhibition
WHERE: Museum of Islamic Art
WHEN: Ongoing till January 18
TIME: 9am onwards
The exhibition comes in celebration of the Qatar-India 2019 Year of Culture and presents a look at magnificent gems and jewellery from India. Set in Stone: Gems and Jewels from Royal Indian Courts showcases more than 100 pieces from across Qatar Museums’ (QM) collections, including many masterpieces that have never been displayed before.

After School Activities
WHERE: Atelier
WHEN: Ongoing
Music and arts activities for students taking place after they finish their day in school includes Group Music lessons, Hip-hop, Ballet, Drawing and Painting, Drama Theatre & Taekwondo. Ages between 5 and 10 years old after school hours.

Photo Exhibition: ‘Experience Tanzania’
WHERE: Multaqa (Student Center) Art Gallery at Education City
WHEN: Ongoing until December 1
TIME: 4pm
‘Experience Tanzania’ is a yearly project supported by Student Affairs Division of Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar that allows students and faculty to explore and immerse themselves in Tanzanian urban and rural cultures. During their trip, WCM-Q professor Dr. Dietrich Büsselberg will be exhibited.

Artistic Gymnastic Classes
WHERE: Qatar Academy Msheireb
WHEN: Ongoing
TIME: 3:15pm – 4:15pm
The Olympic sport using horizontal bar, rings and floor exercises on mats for the children from age 4 till 16.

Ballet Lessons
WHERE: Music and Arts Atelier
WHEN: Ongoing
TIME: 4pm – 8pm
For more info e-mail at registration@atelierqatar.com or call on 33003839.

Hobby Classes
WHERE: Mamangam Performing Art Centre
WHEN: Saturday – Friday
Mamangam is an art and performance centre started with a vision of spreading our knowledge, interests and experience in various disciplines in arts across different countries for children and adults. Mamangam has become the favourite centre for learning. We offer regular classes in the following disciplines like traditional classical and folk dance forms, art and craft, drawing and painting, personality development and public speaking, Bollywood dance, contemporary, hip hop styles, music both vocals and instrumental. To develop health consciousness, we train them karate, yoga with special sessions for kids and adults. Mamangam has also come up with chess and robotics in regular batches in an attempt to give a better learning experience, as they sharpen their minds and brains too.

For those who wish to register for more details, visit www.mamangamqatar.in

Shape your Leadership
WHERE: HEC Paris, Doha Campus
WHEN: November 10-11
TIME: 9am onwards
HEC Paris in Qatar offers ‘Shape your Leadership’ Executive Short Programme with HEC Paris Associate Professor Valérie Gauthier.
This two-day programme is designed to help participants grow self-awareness and self-confidence and to learn to build trust as a team leader. It will also enable participants to have a positive influence over their surroundings and to develop strong leadership.

Compiled by Nausheen Shaikh. E-mail: gtlisting@gmail.com, Events and timings subject to change
Recognition to cherish

Last week Gulf Times Community won the SME Digital Transformation of the Year award at the Qatar Digital Business Awards (QDBA) 2019. HE the Minister of Transport and Communications Jassim Seif Ahmed al-Sulati and MoTC’s Digital Society assistant undersecretary Reem al-Mansoori presented the award.

The award is given to an SME that has successfully deployed innovative digital tools to enhance their operations and services.

Now in its fifth year, the annual QDBA is one of the most prestigious awards of the digital industry in Qatar.

Founded on June 1, 1978, Gulf Times was the first publication of the Gulf Publishing and Printing Organisation and over the years, it has made a mark for itself in the print and media market. The first edition of the Gulf Times was published on December 10, 1978, as a black-and-white tabloid and later the sister Arabic-language paper Arrayah was launched.

Today, the company produces two of the leading print publications in the English and Arabic language market in Qatar, and has also established itself as a leading media brand with strong presence in the country. The key to the success of the company has always been its ability to adapt to latest technology and demographic trends.

In order to foster community interaction and to serve as a platform to facilitate innovative ideas and stories, Gulf Times redesigned its Community supplement on November, 14, 2013. The 16-page Community tabloid was launched to serve and build inter-community bridges, seek expanded coverage and highlight all activities and steps taken by — and for — communities living in Qatar that serve to promote greater understanding and harmony. It opened new doors for its readers to share their stories and connect with one another — be they decision-makers, community leaders, expatriates or citizens.

Gulf Times Community is the only supplement that comes out daily in Qatar. It caters to a robust and culturally diverse population, and so each story is carefully selected keeping in mind the interest of its readers.

Now, by integrating digital to the print news operations, Community is able to produce in-depth multimedia stories. This focus on experimentation and interdisciplinary collaboration has transformed Community newsroom and created a new model for news coverage and other informative articles.

Keeping in line with its bold vision, the company launched www.gulftimescommunity.com — a dynamic website as a brand extension of Community print edition. It offers an ideal platform to reach out to different communities in Qatar, increasing the reach and connectivity by going digital.

Meanwhile, Community has also been able to strengthen its social media presence by actively sharing news and entertainment stories on Instagram. Be it fashion, celebrity news, activities in and around Qatar, or the photo essays submitted by the readers, the vibrant content aims to keep readers engaged and with new plans in place, the quality of content will only get better.

The mission is to provide fresh, vibrant and quality content across each platform in the form of articles, pictures and videos so as to enhance the social interaction among the ever expanding readership of the digital community across the world. This is the platform that will create a premium content environment for global thinkers, business leaders, and luxury consumers to stay informed, inspired and challenged.
THE TEAM at a glance

The Gulf Times Community team blends experience with youth but brings a synergy of fresh ideas to provide rich content. Let’s meet the team!

Kamran Rehmat
Community Editor

After spending a considerable part of my career in mainstream journalism — from the never ending breaking news cycle and circle to analysing mostly political developments — the opportunity to do “people’s journalism” that Gulf Times Community offered back in 2013 was refreshing, to say the least.

One calls it “people’s journalism” because it deals directly with people and their lives, especially away from work and in the social setting which is less obvious in the news beat that largely defines a broadsheet.

But the icing on the cake is our direct engagement with communities that form an essential core of a Qatari society. But the scale of community engagement is not restricted just to the diversity of nationality and the rich mix they bring with their ethnic, religious and cultural moorings. We, at Community, are also a breeding ground for communion at all levels and for all vocations — from the student to the housewife.

But we’re far from done despite the nonstop exciting fare that keeps us hooked at Community. The most riveting bit — a part of our Digital Community project — is on the anvil. Stay tuned for our best and far more engaging interaction with a friendly interface in the weeks ahead!

(Kamran Rehmat is Community Editor and brings rich and varied experience to the job as a print and electronic media person. He has served in leading editorial positions throughout his two-decade plus career. He is also a prominent columnist and has written for Al Jazeera Online as an analyst).

Azmat Haroon
Multimedia Journalist

The media environment world over, including Qatar, is constantly evolving. What we have seen in the media is a shift from a solely print-based model to more diversified media ventures with new and innovative platforms appearing, particularly with the inception of digital media. Since the way many people consume news today has changed — usually on mobile phones, so has the way media corporations produce news.

News is travelling faster than ever before; and more often than not, the way a story is presented changes its impending impact. This isn’t just about taking a story from the print edition and posting it on a website, but altering its shape and format according to every platform. It’s the age of digital story telling and the rise of the multimedia journalism. This evolution took its time but it’s here in Qatar, and journalists are hard-pressed to adapt it.

The new Digital Community platform caters to this vision, and being a part of this innovative media project is an inspiring feat because it has given us the space to be creative while also being resourceful.

(Azmat Haroon is a multimedia journalist with a strong local base. She has mastery over varied subjects and writes with insight and perspective. She is also an ideas person and brings rich depth to her work).

Muhammad Asad Ullah
Multimedia Journalist

As a journalist with a fashion niche, Community gave me its tag, a name, and a space and opportunity to grow; from doing mere celebrity interviews to more opinionated pieces; an access to the cliquish coven of Blahnik wearing fashion designers and editors of local and international fashion industry.

These are culturally sensitive times, and those sensitivities are culturally relative. Community well understands it and has been successfully bringing communities together on one definitive broadsheet for over half a decade now. As a new decade dawns, Community embarks and evolves towards its digital transformation — not just to connect inter-communities, but Qatar with the world.

Where Community largely focuses on light social setting of the stories, fashion, for instance; the colourful inclinations, the sum of impressively executed features and stories actually takes one on a ride to less profoundly melancholic, more palpably fascinating storyline. Isn’t it exciting for you belonging to one community and knowing about other’s inspirational figures, culture and fashion? That’s what we do — we connect each and every one of you and now with digital approach, you with the world. Are you ready? Bisou Bisou!

(Muhammad Asad Ullah is one of the brightest new crop of journalists on the Doha scene. With a penchant for showbiz stories and a rover’s eye on fashion, he is the whiz kid of the team).

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Jossy Abraham
Digital Marketing Manager

Having worked on many important projects throughout my career, what was really crucial for me when I started working on the Digital Community project was to get very clear on the goals right at the start and then create a plan to achieve those. We have worked as a team to push the limits of achievements.

The whole project is developed with an amalgamation of talents within Gulf Times and many from outside.

It proved to be a happy hunting ground for us. The success of the project would not have been possible without the valued support of the company. I’m certain that Digital Community is eventually going to be the best content platform in Qatar.

(Jossy Abraham is the Digital Marketing Manager of Gulf Times and Arrynhh. He started working as a sound engineer and later moved into advertising and media strategic planning with an interest to explore various revenue models in media).
Alumni and candidates of Stars of Science with the students in a photo.

Stars of Science alumni highlight the importance of innovation

High school and university students recently took part in the Stars of Science (SoS) Talk, an initiative of Qatar Foundation (QF), to strengthen the research and development ecosystem within Qatar, as well as, within other Arab countries, at Minaretein Auditorium, Education City. The alumni of Stars of Science shared their success stories, while the finalists of Season 11 explained their inventions and invited people to vote for them with hopes of winning the show during the weekend’s Grand Finale.

As a pioneering initiative of Qatar Foundation, the dedicated research and development ecosystem of Stars of Science is an initiative of innovation and creativity in science, and provide solutions to contemporary challenges that are related to this field,” said Khalifa E Al-Kubaisi, Manager Media Relations and Press Office at QF.

“This TV programme has a special value, not because it focuses only on supporting innovation, but also because it is the only Arabic-speaking reality TV programme that fosters innovation and creativity in the region. Through the inaugural SoS Talk, we aim to provide another inspiring source for future generations to unleash their potential and become researchers, scientists and entrepreneurs,” he added.

As Stars of Science boasts a track record of involving Arab women in scientific innovation, SoS Talk featured several female alumni who reached out to young girls in the audience and described what it meant to be a woman working in the field of science, while highlighting the value that women bring to science and entrepreneurship. Some of the alumni offered insights into experiences of becoming a mother and an entrepreneur simultaneously – a ‘mom-preneur’.

The three Stars of Science Season 11 finalists presented their innovations and encouraged the audience to vote for them online. Abdulrahman Saleh Khamis, from Qatar, showed his Interactive Educational Prayer Carpet, a new technology incorporating sensors and a digital screen in order to help Muslims better perform their prayers.

He said, “Today, I have reached the finals of Stars of Science, and I strongly believe that the product is successful and that it will have a big impact on the market, especially as the number of Muslims increase by nearly 3 million every year. Modern technological tools are needed to help Muslims, especially children and new converts, pray correctly.”

Nuha Abu Yousef displayed her Active Lazy Eyelid Sticker, which stimulates muscles in the eyelid to help patients with afflicted facial muscles regain control over their affected upper and lower eyelids. She said, “Although I faced many challenges, I am happy to have reached this stage and to become one of the top three participants of the programme. Being a mother of two children is not easy, but I do not think about this in a negative way. Instead, it encourages me to finish my journey and set an example for my children.”

Youssef El Azouzi explained how his Flow Modulator Stent helps congestive heart failure patients by improving blood distribution efficiency and preventing further systemic fluid retention in the heart.

“All innovation during Stars of Science, I received a call from a person I didn’t know, who told me that my project gave her hope as it would help many patients who suffer from heart failure. She told me the story of her younger brother who died because of this disease, which in itself motivated me to finish the project,” he said.

Dr Walid Albanna, a neurosurgeon and Season 10 winner, encouraged attendees to adopt a persistent attitude to innovation, while Sadeq Qassim, entrepreneur and Season 2 winner, outlined his progression from innovator to entrepreneur and highlighted the challenges of brand licensing.

Khalid Aboujassoum, Season 4 winner and entrepreneur, emphasized on how Qatar has a strong infrastructure that supports innovative entrepreneurs.

“The contribution of innovation in building a knowledge-based economy for Qatar is very critical. Today more than any time, the career path for innovation entrepreneurship is more viable in Qatar, and I encourage everyone to seriously consider it,” Khalid noted.

Fouad Maksoud, Season 9 winner and Harvard fellow, talked about failure and success while also sharing the progress of his invention, “Nanoski!”, which applies petrochemicals and pharmaceuticals to ordinary textiles to make them waterproof, breathable, and protective.

Other Stars of Science alumni speakers and their areas of discussion, included Anna Malek, who shared advice on how to develop a baby product; Anwar al-Muqarkesh, on tech trends and artificial intelligence; Jenan al-Shehab, importance of female entrepreneurs; Majed Lababidi, ‘Serial Entrepreneur at 35’; Mohammed al-Jefairi, concept of customer validation; Dr Nour Mabrou, women in science; and Walea Aniba, life as a mom-preneur.

The Stars of Science Season 11 Grand Finale will take place on November 8, and will see the finalists defend their inventions one last time before the jury and public vote for the top innovator. Each finalist will be awarded a portion of $600,000 in seed funding to continue refining their products, building upon their progress while competing through the show's conceptualisation, prototyping, and testing phases.

Finalists: Nuha Abu Yousef left, Abdulrahman Saleh Khamis centre, and Youssef El Azouzi.
Three Qatari students who traveled to the US for a two-week research experience after winning Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar’s (WCM-Q) Healing Hands essay competition returned to the college to speak about their trip.

Dalal Khalid al-Fadli, from the Academic Bridge Programme, Dyana Hamad al-Blooshi, of Qatar Academy, Doha, and Haya Khalid Rahimi, who attends Newton International Academy, Barwa City, each won ‘Doctors of the Future’ scholarships when their essays on the topic ‘Lifestyle Medicine in Qatar’ were judged the best from a field of 37 submissions in May.

During the summer, the students spent two weeks gaining experience in Weill Cornell Medicine’s world-class biomedical research laboratories in New York, as well as attending lectures with faculty and meeting students. They then moved upstate to Cornell University in Ithaca where they stayed at the campus, toured the wide range of facilities that the Ivy League university offers. The scholarship also provided for the students to be accompanied by family members as chaperones.

Following the experience, Dalal, Dyana and Haya returned to WCM-Q to attend a completion ceremony and discuss the trip with Dr Javaid Sheikh, Dean of WCM-Q, and other senior faculty members.

Dalal, who joined the WCM-Q Foundation Programme soon after the US visit, said, “The trip was one of the best experiences of my entire life. Visiting the campus at Ithaca was amazing. I am a books person, so I absolutely loved visiting the beautiful old library there. We went all over the campus together and heard about lots of different subjects, which helped me decide that I wanted to study medicine and join WCM-Q.”

Haya also found the trip inspiring. She said: “We got a great introduction to medicine and met so many interesting people. I loved being at the medical college in New York because the students and the doctors there were so focused and dedicated to their work, which really energised and inspired me.”

The Healing Hands essay contest is held annually and is designed to encourage high school students to think critically about relevant healthcare and scientific topics and to consider a career in medicine. Since its launch in 2008, the Qatar Future Doctors scholarship programme has proven to be extremely successful at inspiring and encouraging Qatari students to study medicine and help fulfil the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030. The programme is implemented by the Office of Student Outreach and Educational Development to help promote medical careers to Qatari students. The contribution and support provided in recent years by Dr Randi Silver, Professor of Physiology and Biophysics and Associate Dean at Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences in New York City, who has hosted and mentored many Qatari high school students, is evidence of the strong ties between WMC-Q and the Weill Cornell Medicine campus in New York City.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Javaid Sheikh, said, “It was wonderful to hear about the experiences of these three very intelligent, very impressive young students. We are so fortunate to have such high-calibre students here in Qatar who want to come to WCM-Q.”

MUSICAL PROGRAMME: Punjab Music Group (PMG) is all set to organise a musical programme today at Al Waha Club Al Khor from 5pm onwards. Munawar Khan, notable Pakistani musician, along with Gaffar Lehrli, Kainaat Ali and Chand Ali Khan, notable Pakistani artistes, will be performing at the event. For further details, contact Nazakat Ali Khan, Chief Organiser of PMG, at 77862320.
Residential properties with excellent facilities and inhouse maintenance. Showroom and office spaces at prime locations. Direct from Landlord. No commission charged.
Try This

Smooth running

This experiment shows you why a bunch of tiny balls can make turning things work better.

You’ll need

- Unopened can of soup or vegetables
- About 12 marbles
- Plastic or metal jar lid that fits over end of can
- Pencil
- Modeling clay

Make two balls of clay that are the same size and stick one to each end of pencil

Put jar lid on can and try to spin it

Does it spin easily?

Stick pencil to center of jar lid with a piece of clay

Remove lid from can, put marbles on top of can, then replace lid

Does the lid spin more easily this way?

You’ll need

- Model clay

What happened?

Without the marbles, spinning the jar lid is difficult, like dragging a heavy object along the ground

With the marbles, spinning the lid is like rolling the object along the ground

The marbles greatly reduce the friction between the lid and the can

This arrangement is called a “ball bearing”

Bicycles and cars have ball bearings at the centers of their wheels to make them roll more easily
Lower physical activity leads to higher death rates: Study

Researchers have found the people who had the lowest levels of physical activity had higher rates of death compared to people with higher levels of activity, adding that nine per cent of all premature deaths are caused by not getting enough physical activity.

Physical activity is known to reduce deaths from heart disease, diabetes, chronic lung disease, and mental illness.

For the findings, the research team from Federal University of Pelotas in Brazil, looked more carefully at the relationship between death and physical exercise among older adults in Brazil (where the number of older adults grew 40 per cent between 2002 and 2012).

The study was published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. During the study, from January to August 2014, researchers conducted home interviews with 1,451 adults older than 60. Of these, 971 participants were given wrist monitors to measure their physical activity. Researchers also asked participants about their smoking habits and how they would rate their health.

Additionally, researchers learned about the chronic health conditions participants said they had, including high blood pressure, diabetes, heart problems, Parkinson’s disease, kidney failure, high cholesterol, depression, stroke, and cancer.

The researchers then rated participants’ ability to perform their normal daily activities, including bathing, dressing, getting from bed to chair, going to the bathroom, and feeding.

The researchers concluded that their main findings suggest that low levels of physical activity are associated with higher risks of death, no matter what a person’s level of health was.

Overall, physical activity was important for avoiding early death in older men and women, the study said. – IANS
Wordsearch

ACCORD  PAX  TRANQUIL
HAVEN    SERENE  DOVE
SANCTUARY  CEASEFIRE  REPOSE
ARMISTICE  PEACE  TREATY
PACT  SILENCE  HARMONY
SECURE  CONCORD  REST
CALM  RELAX

Codeword

Every letter of the alphabet is used at least once. Squares with the same number in have the same letter in. Work out which number represents which letter.

Sudoku

Sudoku is a puzzle based on a 9x9 grid. The grid is also divided into nine 3x3 squares. You are given a selection of values and you must fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 square contains all of the digits 1 to 9. Each puzzle has only one solution.

Bound And Gagged

As I was saying before the ambulance went by...

Adam

SOMEONE WANTED AN AUTOGRAPH AND A SELFIE WITH YOU?
HE CALLED ME "COFFEE WOOFER GUY" AND MENTIONED A MEME.
WHAT IS IT BAD?
ONLY IF YOU DON'T ENJOY PUBLIC HUMILIATION.

Pooch Cafe

I NEED TO LOOK TOUGHER SO THE CATS TAKE ME SERIOUSLY.
I GUESS YOU COULD WORK OUT.
NOW I NEED SOME MEMBERS TO FORM A GANG.
OH NO, NOT ME, I'M A PACIFIST.
DON'T FLOAT AROUND TOO MUCH.

Garfield

HEY UGLY DOG!
MADE YOU LOOK!

I'M WRITING MATERIAL FOR THE SQUIRREL.

Sudoku puzzle courtesy: puzzlesolver.com

Wordsearch puzzle courtesy: Puzzlechoice.com
Super Cryptic Clues

Across
1 A sort of meteor? Far from it! (6)
4 Repair broken sword (6)
8 Dare nations conceal a battle ground? (5)
9 You may have to be patient if you want them to see you (7)
10 Denizen of the deep finding work after October (7)
11 Relieved when a seed is transplanted (5)
12 Prospero's playing the tyrant (5)
17 Let in to confess (5)
19 Odd saint given scope (7)
21 Boat taking 500 in a sort of lagoon (7)
22 I wander back to see a New Zealander (5)
23 A psychiatrist has to become smaller (6)
24 Prohibited group, so we hear (6)

Down
1 Sanity - there's possibly nothing saner (6)
2 Eminent performer in some art form (7)
3 Vagrant seen before parking vehicle (5)
5 Bowmen from Ambridge? (7)
6 Is about to study pictures (5)
7 Not all presidents live (6)
9 Indigestion, said Pepys, is troublesome (9)
13 Snub that's recorded (3,4)
14 Playing on organ in Burmese city (7)
15 Scottish food given by witch to American soldiers (6)
16 Time for a full stop (6)
18 1001 and not a young person! (5)
20 Dance and drink with a graduate (5)

Solution

Wordsearch

Codeword
An adaptation that misses promised mystical potential

By Katie Walsh

What is the hold that The Shining has over us, culturally? It’s the popularity of Stephen King, indeed, but it’s also, specifically, Stanley Kubrick’s 1980 film. The surreal and disturbing imagery, the unforgettable performances, and the film’s hypnotic rhythms have woven their way into our collective unconscious and have gotten profoundly stuck there. The cultural grip of The Shining is such that it has a stranglehold on Mike Flanagan’s adaptation of Doctor Sleep, a sequel of sorts, that it nearly chokes the life out of it.

King’s take on what happened after “here’s Johnny” on that snowy Overlook Hotel that this adaptation loses consciousness.

Ewan McGregor stars as the grown-up Danny Torrance (Alex Essoe and Henry Thomas briefly play his parents, Wendy and Jack, or versions of them, and bear incredible resemblance to both Shelly Duval and Jack Nicholson), Dan is placed his demons in their mental lockboxes and hit the bottle hard, like dad. Disturbing psychic visions drive him to a small town in New Hampshire, where he seeks solace in Alcoholics Anonymous, and a new friend, Billy (Cliff Curtis).

Though his darker thoughts are quelled in sobriety, he can’t fully hide his “shine,” and working in hospice care, he and a psychic cat bring solace to patients at the end of their lives. But it’s when a young girl, Abra (Kyliegh Curran), with a powerful shine, reaches out to him that Dan is put to the test. She’s witnessed the True Knot abduct and torture a young boy (Jacob Tremblay), feeding off of “steam,” his psychic soul of sorts.

There’s such a rich vein of original mythology to be tapped with the True Knot, and Flanagan does flesh out their world with intriguing detail. Rebecca Ferguson is entrancing as cult leader Rose the Hat, drawing the most vulnerable, shiny, steamy prey into her trap. Their abduction and feeding rituals are disturbingly horrific and intimate, especially considering the young victims. But Flanagan manages to build motivation and understanding (not empathy) for the True Knot, which makes the stakes that much more interesting and complex. Ferguson and Flanagan make Rose the Hat one of the best horror villains of recent years.

What makes Doctor Sleep so delightfully chewy are its many complex women, from Rose and her psychic accomplice Snakebite (Emily Alynn Land), to the powerful Abra, a girl with a shine so bright, she can astral project. Though Doctor Sleep takes its time ramping up and winding down, a climactic sequence with Abra and Rose facing off, climbing into each other’s minds, is fascinating, and Flanagan visually executes with creativity and clarity.

It’s just that when Doctor Sleep ends up back at the Overlook for another Greatest Hits of The Shining that The Ambien hits. For all the fresh originality of the first half, why do we have to retread Kubrick’s film again? Leashing the film adaptation so closely to Kubrick’s film is a missed opportunity for this story to realise the full mystical potential promised. — TNS

Erivo is superb in flawed biopic of Harriet Tubman

By Chris Hewitt

“God showed me the way,” is how Harriet Tubman explains the astonishing feat of leading dozens of slaves to freedom. If only God could have done a solid for the biopic’s screenwriters and composer.

The good things in Harriet are constantly undone by Terence Blanchard’s old-fashioned, moresounding music, which underscores (but really overscores) the action as insistently as in the silent–movie era. And the Gregory Allen Howard–Kasi Lemmons screenplay relies on explanatory dialogue that makes it seem less like the characters are talking to each other and more like they are looking out in the audience to make sure we’re up to speed on what’s happening.

Cynthia Erivo’s forthright performance as Harriet is the movie’s biggest asset. Sure, it stretches credibility that Tubman possesses not just an iron will but also a Tony Award–calibre singing voice. (Erivo did win a Tony for The Color Purple.) But, in every other way, Erivo grounds the character in humanity. Her Tubman is a modest woman who credits God for all of her achievements. Quite rightly, the movie insists that Tubman is one of our greatest heroes, but even when she’s making a Big Speech, Erivo plays Harriet as calm, determined and confident that faith is guiding her.

One of the movie’s most interesting ideas is that slavery created Tubman’s superpower.

“You’ve been free so long you forgot what it’s like,” she tells a fellow conductor on the Underground Railroad.

Harriet, who escapes shortly after the movie opens, has not forgotten, and the strength, endurance and piety she used to help her get through every difficult day serve her well when she goes to work to lead others to freedom. I’d have loved more detail about how the Underground Railroad functioned, but Harriet offers fascinating glimpses of, for instance, spirituals being used as a code and kind strangers finding ways to make themselves known to escaped slaves.

Unfortunately, there’s not enough of that level of complexity in the screenplay, and by making Tubman’s achievements seem relatively trouble-free, it undervalues the danger and impact of her work. Too often, the script takes the easy way out with huge coincidences and clichés.

“We’re going to need a bigger cart,” a line spoken by an accomplice who learns the number of slaves being carried has just doubled, is either a really inappropriate “Jaws” joke or a really dumb accident. Either way, it takes you out of the movie. I wish, too, that Harriet were stronger at providing context when the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 makes Tubman’s work more difficult by insisting that, essentially, there’s no such thing as a freed slave, even in the North.

Harriet is a necessary movie – it’s shocking It has taken this long for a project on this scale – and, as a director, Lemmons atones for some of her screenplay’s flaws.

Lemmons covers a broad swath of Tubman’s middle years, always organised so that we’re clear on where we are and when the action is happening. Along the way, Lemmons makes room for complexity with a few unexpected scenes, including one in which a friend admonishes Tubman not to judge her for deciding to stay under the yoke of slavery and another that lays bare the foolishness of slave owners thinking they could mistreat their “property” and expect loyalty in return.

Most important, Lemmons chose Erivo, a movie newbie who is British but not a box office name but who is exactly the Harriet that Harriet needs. — Star Tribune (Minneapolis) / TNS
Nigerian Oscar entry Lionheart disqualified for too much English

By Josh Rottenberg

Nigerian’s first-ever submission for best international feature Oscar consideration, the comedy Lionheart, has been disqualified by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for having too much dialogue in English.

Directed by and starring Genevieve Nnaji – who has been called the Julia Roberts of Nigeria – Lionheart has earned strong reviews for the film, which is currently streaming on Netflix, in most English, running afoul of an academy rule that entries in the freshly renamed international feature film category must have “a predominantly non-English dialogue track.”

All but roughly 11 minutes of the 95-minute film – about a woman trying to keep her father’s company afloat in a male-dominated world – are in English.

Lionheart was one of 10 African films officially submitted for Oscar consideration this year, a record for the continent. With the disqualification, the number of films in contention for the award has dropped from 93 to 92. The film is still eligible to be considered in other Oscar categories.

The academy’s decision, which was communicated via email to Oscar voters, was first reported by The Wrap.

This isn’t the first time the academy has disqualified a foreign film from consideration for having too much English dialogue; in recent years, the 2013 Afghan film Utopia and the 2007 Israeli movie The Band’s Visit were disqualified for the same reason.

Still, the disqualification of Lionheart – which, ironically, follows the academy’s decision earlier this year to change the name of the category from best foreign-language film to best international feature film – struck a sour note with at least one high-powered Hollywood figure. Director Ava DuVernay tweeted her dismay, noting that English is the official language of Nigeria.

For her part, Nnaji tweeted in response to the academy’s decision that her movie “represents the way we speak as Nigerians. This includes English, which acts as a bridge between the 500+ languages spoken in our country. ... We did not choose who colonised us. As ever, this film and many like it, is proudly Nigerian.”

In fact, English is the official language of a number of African countries, including Botswana, Ghana, Namibia and Zimbabwe. (One country where English is not the official language, by the way, is the United States of America, which has no official language.)

To many longtime Oscar watchers, the Lionheart decision – which comes in the midst of an ongoing push by the academy in recent years to bring in more members from overseas – may further highlight what some already see as overly arbitrary and sometimes perplexing rules governing eligibility in the international category.

Until a rule change in 2006, for example, films had to be in the official language of the country that submitted them, a requirement that barred the 2004 Italian movie Private from consideration because it was mainly in Arabic and Hebrew. Conversely, non-English-language films Apocalypse and Letters From Iwo Jima were ineligible to compete in the foreign-language category because they were produced in America, despite the fact that both films were nominated for Golden Globes for best foreign-language film.

And if all that is not confusing enough, despite the academy’s ostensibly flexible language requirement, in 1963 a completely dialogue-free film, the Algerian dance film Le Bal, earned a nomination in the foreign-language film category. – Los Angeles Times/TNS
Qatar International Art Festival concludes on a promising note

By Mudassir Raja

A utopia is an imagined community or society that possesses highly desirable or nearly perfect qualities for its citizens.

The recently-concluded five-day-long Qatar International Art Festival (QIAF) was a kind of event that created a short-lived utopia for the artists that came from all corners of the world. In the words of an Iranian artist, “the artists had one language that is art and one message that is love.”

A dazzling closing ceremony was recently held at the drama theatre of Building 16 in Katara, where awards and certificates that were given away to the participating artists and the visiting nationals.

On its opening day – November 1 – the festival witnessed over 1,000 people attending the launching ceremony. Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, General Manager at Katara, formally inaugurated the festival. The opening ceremony was also attended by the ambassadors of Turkey, Iran, Mexico, Argentina, Australia, Ethiopia, and Ecuador in Qatar.

The festival kicked off with the exhibition of paintings, art works, sculptures, handicrafts brought in by the artists. The guests and visitors appreciated and enjoyed the artistic and creative talents that came together from different parts of the world. There were more than 400 artistic pieces on display in the exhibition that includes the works of as many as 90 artists coming from different countries to Qatar, most of them for the first time in the country. Among the 110 Qatar-based artists, 25 were Qatari nationals.

On the second day of the festival, the living painting show was held. In the evening of the same day, there were master classes conducted by eminent artists for other participants and the visitors explaining different techniques and genres of the painting.

The most significant event of the day was a film about the works and achievements of late M F Hussain, a world-known artist. The film is produced by his son Mustafa Hussain, who was present on the occasion. Soon after the master classes, there were panel discussions on different topics related to various fields of the art. On third day, in the morning, the festival participants took part in the live painting. However, the evening was made beautiful with an art fashion show named as MAPS Artistic Fashion Show. The fashion show, first time in Qatar, saw 50 models highlighting different art designs on their costumes. The show also included art designs depicted on different wearable items. It actually opened up a new avenue for the artists to show their skills. The show had three different parts. The first part was fashion wearable items. The second one was interior and home décor. The third part was exhibition of artistic designs pasted on different utensils and other usable items.

On the fourth and final day, the artists continued their live painting show. Later in the day, after the live paintings were completed, the works were put on display in the exhibition.

In the evening, all the visiting and the Qatar-based artists attended the closing ceremony that continued for over three hours. All the participant-artists and members of the organising team were awarded with medals and certificates.

Speaking on the occasion, Rashmi Agarwal, founder and president of MAPS, thanked all the artists and Katara for making the festival a success. “It feels very good if you give food to hungry people. It feels even better if you help someone fulfill his or her dreams. It is a real blessing from the Almighty.”

She added: “Passion and lover for art cannot be defined by a degree in arts or in commerce. It is an immortal thing inside everyone. You need to nourish the seeds with passion, devotion and ceaseless efforts. QIAF is an event in this regard that that connects artists worldwide. We had live paintings, group exhibition, cultural tour, art fashion show and award ceremony.”

The organiser further said: “This year we introduced a unique feather in the festival – the art fashion show. Art is not related to the canvass only. It has different surfaces. The fashion show has three ‘F’ s – fancy, fashion and fantasy.

“My dream towards QIAF is very simple. I want to bring different artists together. It is not easy. I have to face many problems. I however believe that a wish changes nothing but a decision changes everything.”