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*I have been truly changed by this experience and can't wait to go back.*  
Emily Wilson  
Ghana Social Program

(800) 263-0050  
**volunteerabroad.ca**



If you ask this sciencetician  
He will tell you  
**The BLACK DOG**  
is a sensible part  
of any healthy diet

# FREE STUFF!



**Wanna check out the sneak preview of *The Lookout*?**

Come up to 3-04 SUB today (Thursday) and answer this skill-testing question:  
**What television show is Joseph Gordon-Levitt best known for?**

*The Lookout* Screens Monday, 26 March at 7pm at Edmonton City Centre.

# THE GATEWAY

# An amazingly graceless film

**Amazing Grace**  
Directed by Michael Apted  
Starring Ioan Gruffudd, Ciaran Hinds, Romola Garai and Youssou N'Dour  
Opens Friday, 23 March  
Empire Theatres

MARIA KOTOVYCH  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

We all know that the fight to end the slave trade in the British Commonwealth was a slow process, but *Amazing Grace* took it too literally. Really, the film must have mirrored its pacing to this historical process, for it's just as sluggish and seems to take forever to end.

*Amazing Grace* tells the story of William Wilberforce (Ioan Gruffudd), a British Member of Parliament who fought to end the slave trade in British colonies. Wilberforce's religious revelations and awareness of slavery conditions lead his dedication to the Abolitionist cause. While this description might sound short, that's really all there is to the plot.

*Amazing Grace* tries to depict too many different historical events, causing the movie to drag even at the most exciting points. If it had focused just on the anti-slavery movement, it would have been stronger and less convoluted. It also doesn't help that the script is seriously dull. In the end, although all the acting is top-notch, the cast doesn't have a lot to work with, and so their talents go wasted.

Gruffudd plays Wilberforce quite convincingly and passionately, and Romola Garai plays Barbara Wilberforce—his socially aware love interest—with poise. Unfortunately, her character isn't developed beyond being smart; she's interesting, yes, but we aren't shown how she developed her social conscience, nor do we get to learn very much about this unconventional 18th century English woman. By the end of the movie, she ends up being nothing more than a pretty face.

***Amazing Grace* tries to depict too many different historical events, causing the movie to drag even at the most exciting points.**

Another character, who unfortunately spends most of his time on the sidelines, is Oloudagh Equiano (played by Youssou N'Dour), a former slave who bought his own freedom. Born in Africa, the real-life Equiano was a key figure in the fight against slavery. His personal experiences as a slave and descriptions of conditions on plantations and slave ships provided a direct account of slavery to the aid of the Abolition movement.

Furthermore, because he was educated, intelligent and eloquent, Equiano shows that Africans aren't sub-human or "savages"—a widespread belief among European colonists. Yet Equiano's presence isn't explained in this movie; audiences unfamiliar with the real-life Equiano won't understand how this man managed to procure his freedom. By marginalizing Equiano's story, the film behaves no better than other historic and artistic works that silence the voices of the oppressed while focusing on the great (white) men of history. It's an ironic and self-defeating oversight.

However, unlike other films that discuss slavery, *Amazing Grace* does a good job of accurately presenting its conditions. In the most memorable scene, Wilberforce takes a bunch of hoity-toity, upper-class Brits to a newly returned slave ship, and makes them inhale the horrible smells coming from the ship, the result of close quarters for an extended period of time. Scenes like these make the movie stronger and show elements of history that many viewers might not have known before.

Unfortunately, for *Amazing Grace* these impacting scenes are outnumbered by many unnecessary and boring ones. In the end, what could've been an interesting and insightful movie winds up leaving audiences tired of the whole slavery debate rather than enlightened.

AMANDA ASH  
**HOW TO MAKE THE KIDS SCREAM** The Fray played to a sold-out crowd of primed teenaged hipsters Monday night.