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Next issue Fri 2nd June
Deadline 10am, Thur 1st June

COMING

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BAD TASTE (18) Thurs 11.30pm
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THEATRE REVIEW

Waiting for Godot, by Samuel Beckett
Burton Taylor Theatre, 9.30pm, until Saturday 3rd

You do understand this play; you just don't realise it. Beckett's masterful two-act drama leads us ever deeper into questioning the nature of reality. The plot is simple: two clowns, Vladimir and Estragon, try to pass the time waiting for the mysterious Godot, who is always coming tomorrow. From this scenario of unfulfilled anticipation, confusions arise that have no obvious solution. A tree cannot go from bare branches to full leaf in a day - more time must have passed. But the wound on Estragon's leg, sustained yesterday, is still fresh. Reason tells us this is impossible but Beckett offers no solution as he progressively undermines our confidence in how we relate to the world around us. If people you have met before invariably claim not to recognise you, how do you know that you did not dream the meeting?

All four cast members give extremely strong performances, demonstrating a real understanding of their subject matter. Robert Wells and Samuel Reich work naturally together as the bowler-hatted clowns. Some of the most effective drama in the play originates directly from their use of mirror image, or synchronised gesture, which is at once both funny and thought-provoking. Reich, in particular makes excellent use of posture and facial expression to bring out the depth of humour and irony contained in the script. He is closely matched by Robert Styles, playing Lucky and a Boy. Each of Styles' two characters has a unique and convincing persona; I did not realise until afterwards that the same person played them. Michael Brett Brennan has the perfect physique for Pozzo, and his performance spotlessly compliments this natural strength.

On a minimalist stage (whose appearance becomes increasingly distasteful, as a burger and fries are trampled to pulp) these energetic actors flippantly lead us to question all that we take most for granted. At the end of the play the audience is left to await an empty stage. After one and a half hours of unfulfilled waiting, Gogo and Didi are gone. Their temporary reality has ceased and we file out of the door, back to the real-life of the streets; wiser perhaps, but less secure.

Emily Wood, 30 / 5 / 00

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THEATRE

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Old Fire Station 794490
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30 May-3 June, 7.30pm
Peter Guave's study of social artificiality and racial reaction.

Burton Taylor Theatre 798600
HOME BREWED 30 May-3 June, 7.30
See review.
WAITING FOR GODOT 30 May - 3 June, 9.30
See review.

Pegasus Theatre 722851
THE CRUCIBLE 30 May-Sat 3 June 9pm.
See review.

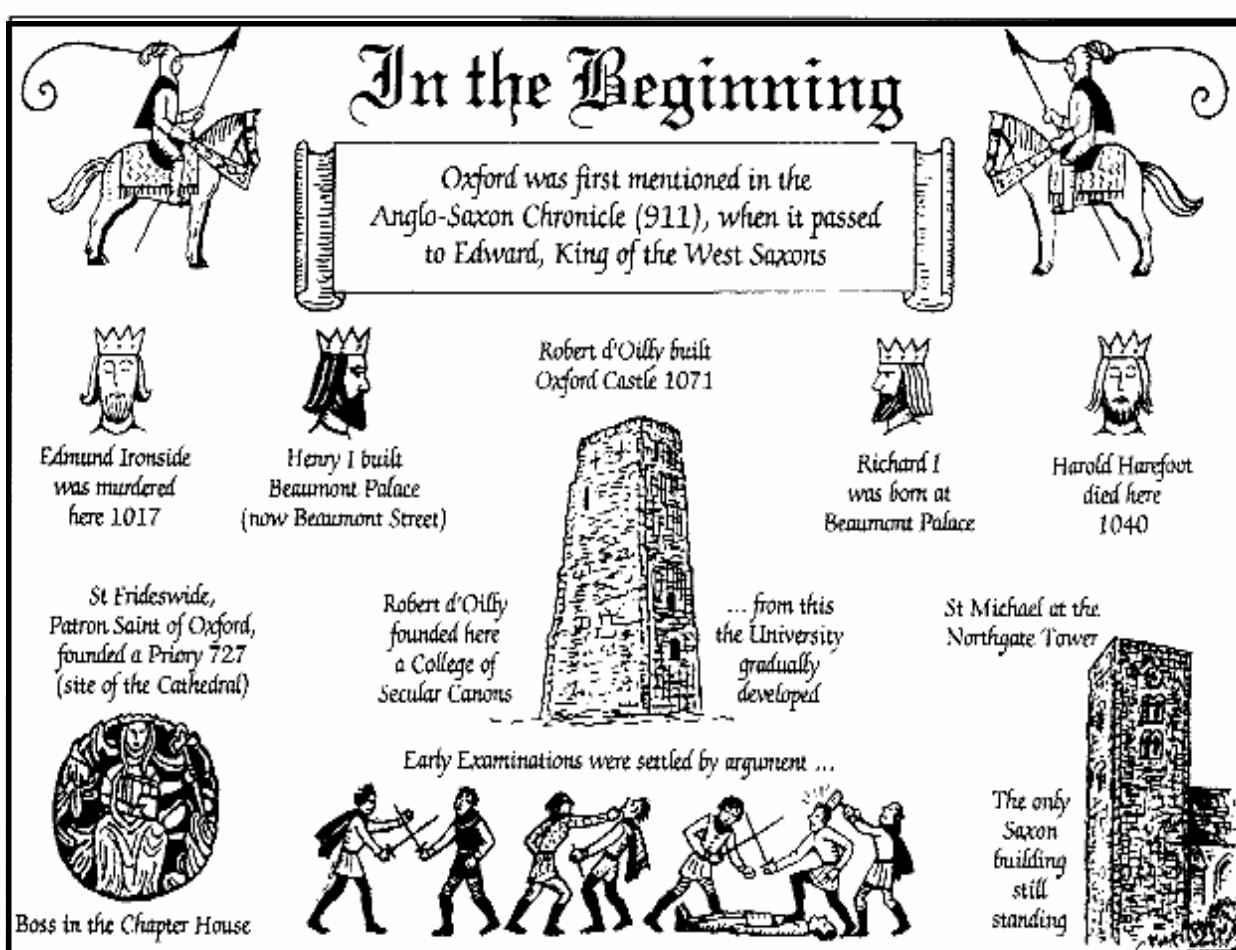
Trinity College Gardens
THE KNOCKY 31st May - 3rd June 7pm
Sat. mat. 2.30
Cockney council estate drama.
Newman Rooms, Catholic Chaplaincy
THE MAGIC FLUTE 31st May - 3rd June, 7.30pm
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3 BEDROOM ACCOMMODATION sought, June to beginning July. Fiona 250636
ACADEMIC COUPLE SEEK house-sitting arrangement or similar. Kathryn 552308
PROF FEMALE SEEKS houseshare from 24 June susie.mullen@acnielsen.co.uk
FEMALE PROF 32 seeks houseshare Jericho/Summertown from July/August. Julie@jagodwin.freereserve.co.uk
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SOCIABLE YOUNG PROF seeks room north oxford/jericho phone James: 07974249069
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GIGS + NIGHTLIFE

Thursday 1st June
IN FOR A PENNY, IN FOR A POUND / Entry £1.01 - £1 returned to performers, 1p returned to non-performers / Brewery Gate, St. Thomas / 8.30 / 243692
ANDY SHEPPHARD BAND / the Spin, at roots.net / Tickets from the Spin, or 741909 / 791355 / £8-£12 / www.the-spin.net
KOOLER with DJ Mark Fisher / Indie Dance Grooves / £5/£4 / 8pm-2am / The Bully, 162 Cowley Road / 244516 / www.thebully.f9.co.uk
OXFORD FOLK CLUB Open Night / Port Mahon, St Clements / 8.30pm
MIDGET & WINGNUT / £5 / 8pm / The Point, the Plain / 798794 / thepoint.oxfordmusic.net



Nobody knows quite how Oxford University originated, though many believe it to have been started by teachers and students expelled from the University of Paris.

For many years University College maintained a claim to have been founded by King Alfred, and to have been the original college. Merton also has strong claim to this distinction.

To this day University and Merton are kept apart at matriculation ceremonies, as there has been some trouble in the past when more than one Dean has claimed the right, as Dean of the oldest college represented, to make the address.

In any case, Oxford was well established as an academic centre by the end of the twelfth century; a prior of Worcester, writing in 1190, described it as "abounding in men skilled in mystic eloquence, weighing the words of the law, bringing forth from their treasures things new and old."

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THEATRE REVIEW

Home Brewed

Burton Taylor Theatre, 7.30pm, until Saturday 3rd

Commendation must always be given (and allowances made for) student-written comedy sketches, for these are possibly the most difficult to stage with self-assured panache. This particular cocktail of skits was no exception. Sadly lacking in Lethal Kick or Stylish Delivery, some vital ingredients were, however, definitely present. Linguistic games and absurd situations (from the Batmobile failing an MOT test, to adventures in a mad, blind hairdressers salon) make for a promising variety of comedy styles. Yet these vary dramatically in success - and perhaps unsurprisingly, for there are no less than 9 different writers whose material forms the basis of the production, leaving the ensemble lacking any continuity or comical cross-reference. The actors occasionally seemed to flounder in the diverse roles, but they clowned with charisma and sometimes revealed flashes of true comedy. Yet if the art of execution of humour lies principally in the timing, this five-strong cast could do well to watch synchronisation. And in this they would do well to include the lighting director, as a weakness on his cues did nothing to sharpen the usually feeble sketch endings into dramatic punches. This is hopefully a fault that will be remedied with progressive performances.



It is, in fact, within the title that the principle source of humour lies, for it is more apt than even the director could have desired. Homebrewed, that most typical of under-the-staircase student mad beverages, is the perfect analogy for this production. Often slightly flat, and semi-unpalatable, a longer maturation period would have benefited the product of this ambitious enterprise. Yet it retains the indisputable virtue of an unconscious potency so that continuous consumption over 75 minutes results in a certain good-humoured hilarity. (I should make it clear that the metaphor does not extend to the obligatory post-Homebrew vomit, to my relief). On the contrary, a lingering chuckle is likely to be the only thing on your lips as you leave the theatre, combined with the thrill that some of the contributors may in time mature, and go on to produce some of the high-class comedy liqueur of the future.

I can but recommend that you try it yourself.

Rosanna Wellesley, 30 / 5 / 00

EXHIBITIONS

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION AND COMPETITION: Monday 22nd May Evening. Life through the lens takes a surreal twist as this exhibition is inspired by dreams. It has attracted entries from various colleges, and wine will be served. St.Hilda's Arts Festival. Details: contact Danielle Cunningham on 07968 331319
"DANNING": an exhibition of b/w photography by Darragh Smyth at Cafe Something, Walton Street, Oxford, May 13 - June 10. Contact 01865 794581 or visit www.physiol.ox.ac.uk/~dms/prints
MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES MONTH MAY 2000 - GALLERY TALKS. Informal introductions to the Pitt Rivers Museum and its collections. Saturdays and Sundays in May 2.30pm. Pitt Rivers Museum, Parks Road, Oxford. Free admission.
COLLECTAMANIA! Free exhibition exploring individuals' emotional attachments to their collections. Monday - Saturday, 1pm - 4.30pm, until Autumn 2000. Balfour Galleries, Pitt Rivers Museum Annex, 60 Banbury Road, Oxford. 01865 270927 www.prm.ox.ac.uk
WEEGEE 02.04.2000 - 02.07.2000 at MOMA, 30 Pembroke Street, Oxford. 01865 722733 Over 220 photographs from the Bertinon Collection, Berlin. www.moma.org.uk
ORLANDO'S BUTTERFLIES exhibition by Sara Davidmann 2.04.2000 - 2.07.2000 at Cafe MOMA, 30 Pembroke Street, Oxford. 01865 722733 Intriguing portraits of the transvestite world. www.moma.org.uk
RAPHAEL TO ROMANO Summer exhibition of drawings by Raphael and his followers in Rome and Mantua. Christ Church Picture Gallery 26 May - 8 August. Mon-Sat 10.30 - 1 and 2.00 - 4.30. Sunday 2 - 4.30 (till 5.30 after Easter). Tel. 276172.
JEFF CLARKE: NEW WORK. Landscapes and still-lives painted over the last three years. 28 May - 25 June. Christ Church Picture Gallery, Mon-Sat 10.30 - 1 and 2.00 - 4.30. Sunday 2 - 4.30 (till 5.30 after Easter). Tel. 276172.
TURNER'S OXFORD. A major loan exhibition, charting the artist's long love affair with the city 20 June - 1 September 2000. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Admission Free. Further info: 288298, sarah.brown@ashmus.ox.ac.uk
VISUALISING INSULIN SECRETION. The work of the scientist Frances Ashcroft on insulin secretion interpreted by the painter Benedict Rubbra. 6 May - 31 July 2000. 12.5pm daily Free admission. Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford.
GLASS OF FOUR MILLENNIA. The history of glass from c1500 BC to the present day Ashmolean Museum. 18 May - 9 July Admission free. Tel. 278009

THEATRE REVIEW

The Crucible, by Arthur Miller

Pegasus Theatre until Saturday 3rd June

In case you're unfamiliar with Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, this is an excellent chance to acquaint yourself. Miller's gripping drama was winner of the 1953 Tony Award for Best Play. The story is based on the Salem witch trials in 1692 colonial America, during which 20 alleged witches were hanged. All of the characters are based on actual participants: Miller used records from the court proceedings. Although I found the seats uncomfortable and the theatre a bit stifling for want of some cool air by the end of the second act, the production was nonetheless very well done.

A stark set, built entirely from forklift pallets, at first led me to believe that the acting might match. "Student play," I thought. Then, the opening background of a religious choral (with a pretty soprano) had too many off notes, which backed up my suspicion. I was, however, impressed by the authenticity of the costumes. And from then on I was enthralled by Miller's powerful masterpiece, deftly handled by great young actors.

The tragic story begins as a group of teenage girls accuse a servant of leading them into witchcraft. They do this in order to deflect blame from themselves after they are caught engaged in an evidently occult dance in the woods. Led by one of the girls (who has been spurned by a married man), and stimulated by the success of this accusation, they begin naming more people also in league with the devil. Those accused of witchcraft are taken from their homes in iron handcuffs and thrown into jail until their trial. They are then faced with the decision of damning others to save themselves, for they can escape hanging by confessing, and incriminating others. In the aftermath of the events in Salem, it was generally agreed that none of those hung had actually been witches at all.

Miller intended the play as an allegory for modern political witch hunts. Written at the height of Senator Joseph McCarthy's crusade against communism, Miller was forced to testify in front of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which was investigating, among other things, communist infiltration of the Hollywood film industry. He was likewise ordered to name colleagues but refused.

Again, even if you're familiar with the tale, this is an excellent retelling of a heartbreaking story. Well worth seeing.

Andy Cohen, 30 / 5 / 00



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MEETINGS

Free Barebones entries for day of meeting only Societies running regular, repetitive meetings will be listed separately once a week during term, under "Regular Meetings".

Thursday 1st June
OU LECTURE: THE FUTURE OF ANGLICAN RELATIONS. Senator Gary Hart, Gulbenkian Lecture Theatre/5pm/OUmembers + special permission only.
OXFORD REFORM CLUB / Dr Evan Harris, MP / 8pm / Venue TBA

PREVIEW

ION, BY EURIPIDES

Old Fire station, 6th-10th June

Ion is no sitcom. Euripides is known not to have pandered to the whims and fancies of the Athenian theatre-going mob; he wrote psychological dramas in which he forced his characters to confront difficult, often very personal issues.

The Athenian princess Creusa is raped by Apollo; she exposes her ill-begotten infant boy, hoping that he will die. However, Hermes comes to his rescue and bears him to Delphi, where he is nurtured by the priestess of that famous temple. His name is Ion, and he becomes the guardian of the temple. Creusa, meanwhile, has married Xouthos. Unhappily, they are childless and - at the start of the play - travel to the Delphic oracle to petition the gods to make them fruitful. Here Creusa and Ion meet, strangers to each other.

What ensues is a difficult and moving drama of human struggle and suffering, interwoven with a lighter tale of growing up. The problems and experiences portrayed are as universally human and compelling as they were two and a half millennia ago. Creusa's lamentation to Zeus could be culled from any modern drama: "Both men I've slept with have used me ..."

Director Joanna Dirmikis deserves praise for bringing to Oxford audiences a little-performed play. Those who saw *Philoctetes* at Aulis, also by Euripides, in the original Greek last year will find it interesting to compare its more traditional interpretation with Dirmikis' new adaptation, which includes an interestingly modernised frame around the central narrative.

Marie-Louise Crawley is convincing as the tormented Creusa. Joel Stanley portrays Ion with a shoulder-slumping indifference that contrasts well with Crawley's febrile energy. Roland Lloyd Parry amusingly renders Xouthos as a honey-toned, slimy car salesman type. Unsurprisingly, the chorus, under the sway of Laura Leeroy, punctuate the action with a series of sinister incantations.

The set is white throughout and simple. The costumes, timesed, and, rumour has it, very expensive. Ultra-violet light will be used to suggest the night sky.

Quite appropriately *Ion* is still not easily consumable populist fare. This is a challenging and interesting production that should be supported.

Jean Meiring, 30 / 5 / 00

