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Next issue Fri 1st December
Deadline 10am, Thur 30th November

THURSDAY 30TH NOVEMBER 2000 (8TH WEEK)

COMING

WOLFSON CHRISTMAS BALL. Saturday 9th December, 2100-0400 hours, £16. DJ's, bands, karaoke, tatooist, ceilidh, casino. www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/clubs/barco/xmas-balls/

OXFORD BACH CHOIR. Dream of Gerontius by Elgar. Sheldonian Theatre, Saturday 2 December, 7.30pm. Students £6. Playhouse box office 798600.

ST JOHN'S CHAPEL CHOIR. Friday 1st December, 8.30pm, St John's College Chapel. £5 (£3)

LOST AND FOUND

FOUND- PHILLIPS MOBILE phone, 27/11, Summertown. alim_40@yahoo.com

THOUGHT FOR A WINTER DAY

"Semper ubi sub ubi."

THEATRE REVIEW

Spit Roast

Burton Taylor Theatre, 7.30, until Saturday 2nd

The cast of *Spit Roast* was always going to have a hard task translating the three tentative ideas of the audience (and some rather uninspiring props) into an improvisation which could captivate for 50 minutes. Given a title "Window Shopping"; a key word "Moist" and the phrase "Don't Touch!", it was difficult to see how the company would be able to continue the energy displayed in the warm-up, through a 50 minute production.

The warm up was a hilarious potted version of *Whose Line is it Anyway?*, and included well-worn classics such as the "party" scene (how the host managed to identify a psychedelic mushroom before a man who had come out without his pants is beyond me), and the moving parts game. All the indicators were that the cast had the talent and spontaneity to make the main show work, and the audience went into the show with an open mind.

Almost immediately it became obvious that some of the cast were out of their depth with so much freedom and so little structure, and the momentum of the warm-up was lost in the shallow character development that the improvisation exposed. The word and phrase were used only twice each throughout the entire piece, and were repeated in the same context on each occasion. Certainly the actors could have gone out of their way to gratify the audience by more extensive usage of their suggestions and prescriptive props (how easy it is indeed to use a hat or scarf, though the whistle and packet soup were conspicuously unused).

There were moments of genius in the play, and the acting was generally of a high standard, though it was also true that some characters were so underdeveloped as to be entirely overshadowed. The audience was largely forgiving of the mundane and inane in anticipation of the next gem, and whilst this experiment in performance style did just about come off, the cast might have met with more success had they worked though a series of smaller sketches rather than attempting such an unwieldy project.

Sherree Halliwell, 28 / 11 / 00

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CINEMA

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BILLY ELLIOT (15) Daily 3.25, 8.25
A miner's son takes up ballet.

BEDAZZLED (12) Daily 1.35,3.55,6.20,8.45
Brendan Fraser sells his soul to Elizabeth Hurley.

LITTLE NICKY (12) Daily 1.15,6.00
Satan's son gets up to mischief.

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GOT A COMPUTER[redacted] http://absolutesuccess.biz [redacted] or work@absolutesuccess.[redacted]icemail)

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'TOMMY PA[redacted] station is empty except for on[redacted]ng suitcase. He beckons Tommy[redacted]his play. Send me your ideas. If th[redacted]uilder@hotmail.com

AUDITIONS

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MIDSUMM[redacted]**FIRE** Station production. Auditi[redacted]hursday 30th. 730-9.30. Ask at Lodg[redacted]

[redacted]RE

Apollo [redacted]**70 606 3500**
GLYNDE[redacted]***PERA***
DON G[redacted]**Fri 1st Dec 7.15**
See revi[redacted]
LA BOHEME (Puccini) **Sat 2nd Dec 7.15**
THE LAST SUPPER (Birtwistle) **Thur 30th Nov 7.15**

Old Fire Station 794490
RICHARD III
Tue 28th Nov[redacted]
Thu[redacted]
Shakespeare's bloody history. [redacted]

Burton Taylor Theatre
SPIT ROAST Tue [redacted]
Improvised comedy. [redacted]
SKINS Tue[redacted]
Controversial contem[redacted]

Pegasus Theatre[redacted]
ORGANILLO Thur [redacted]
Contemporary music a[redacted]

GIGS + NIGHTLIFE

Thursday 30th November

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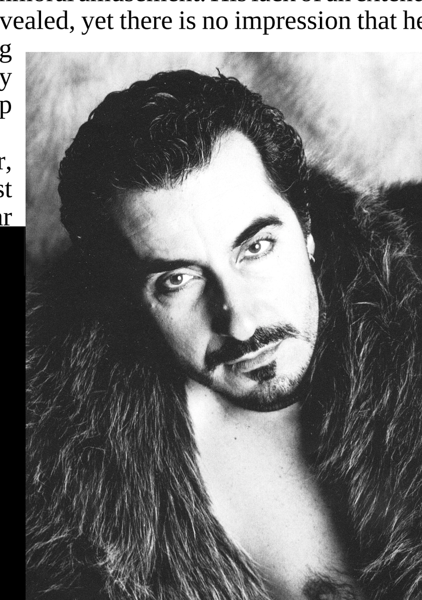
OPERA REVIEW

Don Giovanni

Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Apollo Theatre, Tuesday 28th Nov and Friday 1st Dec

The curtain swings back to reveal a huge pile of what looks like dirt, but could be peat, coal or something similar. The production credits in the programme reveal the hitherto unsuspected notion that this is a 'landslide' created by- boom boom- a Mr. Pyle. It is around this dominating dark mass that the action of *Don Giovanni* takes place. It also alerts one to the tone of the staging of this production- very "installation art", very *Sensation*. Th[redacted]e desired effect with the unveiling of a dead horse, slung from a harness, at the b[redacted]ct. This creation was a direct homage to the dead mule exhibited in the Tate a ye[redacted]e splutters of protest.

There is a[redacted]e become numbed against the 'shock value' of such pieces- after [redacted]kled animal can give the spectator an uncomfortable *frisson*. [redacted]e absurd in this production, as well as fine characterisation and [redacted]ou would hope this vile seducer would be - lupine, lascivious, and [redacted]e struts around the stage in very tight leather trousers, cutting a [redacted]amoral, rather than immoral amusement. His lack of an extended [redacted]f the Don is never revealed, yet there is no impression that he is [redacted]r avoided descending [redacted]ormances, especially [redacted]ira and the clued-up



[redacted]layered with humour, [redacted]the last category must [redacted]nue dressed in a clear [redacted]ert, moulded [redacted]vell delineate[redacted]erfectly groo[redacted]easts[redacted]scen[redacted]ht, ra[redacted]along[redacted]ly cr[redacted]audie[redacted]wo[redacted]this

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CONCERTS

Thursday 30th November

ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT / Thomas Zehetmair, violin and director / Vivaldi: Concerti / Sheldonian Theatre/ 8pm / Music at Oxford, 0870 750 0659

STEPHEN MOTTRAM'S "ORGANILLO"/ Collaboration between the composer Sebastian Castagna and the puppeteer Stephen Mottram / The Pegasus Theatre / Magdalen Road / £6.50 (£4.50)

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS with international organ recitalist KEVIN BOWYER / including such favourites as Wachet Auf, and music by Messiaen, Peeters and Daquin. Magdalen College Chapel, 8pm

THEATRE REVIEW

Richard III

Old Fire Station until Saturday 2nd

Richard III at the OFS this week is a very creditable example of student Shakespeare, both providing interesting insights into the play and showcasing some really excellent acting talent. Richard Brent is magnificent in the title role, commanding the stage throughout. From the beginning he uses his exceptional feel for Shakespearean verse and some remarkable comic timing to establish a real rapport with the audience. Brent's Richard draws the spectators into his machiavellian world, making us accessories to his crimes. He manages to play up to the pantomime villainy of the early acts, while later in the play laying bare the bitterness and insecurity of a man cruelly treated by nature and unloved even by his own mother – a man who by his own misdeeds alienates everyone close to him.

Lest Richard appear too black a villain, Ed McGown's production neatly brings out the widespread corruption of the times. To this end he elicits good supporting performances from Alistair Sooke, as the likeable but careless Hastings, and particularly from Rob Crumpton, as Richard's closest ally Buckingham. With delicious cynicism Crumpton draws on the humour in the text to great effect, but does not miss the tragedy in his character's final and inevitable fall from grace. Others, however, are perhaps less successful, as the comic element in the play occasionally eclipses the essential darkness of the plot.

But on the whole the play's large cast carry off their parts well. Jean Meiring and Tom Wood are good in the sympathetic roles of King Edward and Clarence. The female cast too is strong: notable are Jill Crawford as Anne Neville, who performs creditably in a difficult role; and Luci Millward, who, as a defiant Queen Elizabeth, is one of the few actors able to challenge Brent's dominance of the audience's consciousness.

If there is a downside to this production, it is that the visual impact of the play is hampered by an uninspiring set and unambitious costumes. Moreover, as in many student productions, difficulties are encountered in successfully establishing age differences between characters, and the impact of certain scenes is diminished by blocking which, at times, fails to meet the challenge of Shakespeare's verse. Nonetheless, a fine cast featuring some exceptional individual performances makes this a highly entertaining and witty interpretation of a difficult play.

James MacInnes, 28 / 11 / 00

CONTACTS

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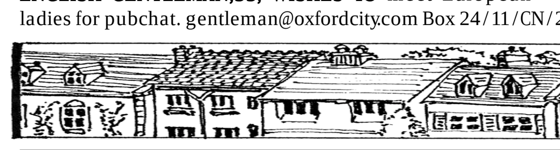

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MEETINGS

Organisation / Subject / Speaker / Place / Time / Contact

Thursday 30th November

MYSTERY SPEAKER/Come and see who the speaker is/8.00pm/ Blue Boar Seminar Room, Christ Church. Contact timothy.waters@stcatz.ox.ac.uk

FUSION / Multi-ethnic charity fashion show with much Asian colour, music and dance / Town Hall, 7pm / www.oxfordfusion.com

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REVIEW

Skins, by Jennifer Allen

Burton Taylor Theatre, 9.30, until Saturday 2nd

The first performance of "controversial dance piece" *Skins*, by Ruskin student Jennifer Allen, was packed out by a serious crowd at the BT last night. That is, a crowd serious enough not to laugh out loud at any point at the spectacle which unfolded before them: upon entering the theatre space it was immediately evident that this would not be dance of any particularly easy nature. Rather, we were presented with performance art of a cleverly disturbing kind, with imagery of sexual exploitation, mental illness and a warped domesticity overlapping, meshing and repeating to form a chain of nightmarish fantasy. Like watching a psychology documentary on the behaviour of victims of abuse or possessors of severe drug psychoses, this is not comfortable viewing (although Will Self might possibly consider it light entertainment), and Jennifer has to be a remarkable person to perform as she does - totally alone - with only a modified and looped video of herself writhing as a projected backdrop.

Skins is a product of the mind of the same woman whose art was ousted from the exhibition space at the OUP on the inappropriate charges of racism and sexual explicitness (the latter charge being attributed to the presence of the iconic cloth penises which also feature in *Skins*). Jennifer Allen is probably somebody whom the art world should keep their eye on for future reference: her work has resonances of Gillian Wearing (the bandaged face), Tracey Emin and various others. Taking this and the trends in a lot of contemporary performance art into consideration, it may be said that this particular piece does not address new themes in particularly new ways - but its appearance in Oxford in this context is a very new and most welcome event, and the way in which the audience is provoked and made uneasy (the spotlight even turning upon them so they can sweat and feel exposed for a change) genuinely provides a refreshing change from the standard Oxford student drama fare.

Ultimately, you have to hand it to someone who dares to do what Jennifer Allen will be doing for the next few nights instead of going down the pub at 9.30 - indeed, we must all hand it to a woman who can be so sexy and frightening with sellotape, and dance so violently on top of a cooker without falling off.

Sue Jordan, 28 /[redacted]

JOBS WANTED

STUDENT SEEKS WO[redacted]or improving English (house,farm) jblahus@[redacted]

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