Oxford's DAILY INFO

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Thurs 10th - Fri 11th Feb 2005 (4th week)

WHAT'S ON / COMING SOON

Oxford Amnesty Lectures 2005 I AND PIGHTS

FRANK BRENNAN

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Friday 11 February Sheldonian Theatre, 5.30pm

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THEATRE REVIEW

Waiting for Godot Waiting for Godot is one of the great staple of twentieth century theatre. This, in its self or wentern century uncare. This, in its sent, poses problems for any new production, par-ticularly one by a student group, such as this. The status of the play is such that the concept of *Waiting for Godot* has passed into the popular consciousness, and that fact colours the manner

in which a modern audience responds to it. The play centres on two characters, Vladimir (Sam Thomas) and Estragon (Clem Hitchcock), who wait, in vain for the enigmatic "Godot". As they pass their time talking of everything and nothing, their task is enlivened by the entrance of Pozzo (Ollie Brock) and his servant Lucky

of Pozzo (Ollie Brock) and his servant Lucky (Will Pooley), who pass by the pair en route to market. It is a play about non-events, about repetition and anticipation. The current production, running this week at the Old Fire Station, is the third version I have seen, and although it is not the strongest, the ext and enversible do initiate to the about cast and crew certainly do justice to the piece. cast and crew certainly do justice to the piece. The set, consisting of a tree in silhouette and a mound that serves as a seat, is minimalist but effective; certainly the material calls for noth-ing more. The costumes are well chosen, fitting the characters perfectly. I was, at first, a little layer absolute the the desciperator at any Underwise taken aback by the decision to put Vladimir and Estragon in whiteface, however as the play ed I found that it suited them well: they are, after all, essentially clowns, acting out their little comedy for the benefit of the world in general



TASTE OF PALESTINE - food, music, poetry, more 730pm, 12 Feb. Asian Cultural Centre, Manzti Wav E&/55. **Oxford Amnesty Lectures 2005** LAND RIGHTS **KEN WIWA** If this is your land, where are your stories? Thursday 10 February Sheldonian Theatre, 5.30pm kets £6/£4. Season tickets £30/£20. Availa Tickets Oxford 01865 305305, on door, gh www.oxford-amnesty-lectures.org

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Sam Thomas gives a solid performance as Vladimir, although Clem Hitchcock's softly spoken Estragon was perhaps the more memo-rable of the two. The interplay between the two characters is well observed (which is fortunate, since it is central to the success of the play). Pozzo is superbly larger than life, and played with a creditable panache by Ollie Brock. The character of Lucky is always a difficult

The character of Lucky is always a difficult one: silent for the entire play, save for one long stream-of-consciousness monologue in the first act. Will Pooley makes a very good attempt, but I did not find his rendition entirely to my taste. The speech in particular fel a little way focus down I had when the dimensional stream. more forced than I had expected. The speech more forced than I had expected. The speech can be delivered in such a way as to knock the audience backwards with a torrent of words; here it seemed to be an ordinary, if somewhat incoherent, soliloquy. As always, the big question is: should I go ordere thirties?

and see this play? As always, the answer is: it depends on what you're looking for. This isn't any great tour de force, but neither is it actuany great tour de force, but neither is it actu-ally substandard in any way. It is a competent production of a classic play. If you have never seen *Waiting, for Godor* at all, go and see this production – the play is worth it in its self, and this is a perfectly good version to see. If you have already seen the play, and want to see it worth the method. again then once again this could be worth your time, but don't expect anything you haven' seen before

Waiting for Godot is showing at the Old Fire Station un Saturday 12th Feb

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between Adriana and her sister Luciana (Amy Stacy) was artfully brought out.

This production is terrific fun, visually arresting and utterly entertaining. Don't expect anything more than this, but then, with frivolity this good, why would you want to?

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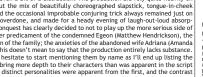
from this improbable set of circumstances, but it's definitely in the face that ender from this improbable set of circumstances, but it's definitely not all gam. The action is overshadowed by the first scene in which the father of one set of twins is sentenced to death, and the mire of mistaken identity, so amusing to the audience, comes across as increasingly nightmarish to the twins themselves.

A lot of people have expressed a lack of enthusiasm for *The Comedy of Errors* (too contrived; too formulaic; too many unforgiveably bad productions). This review is not intended to comment on the merits of the play in comparison to Shakespeare's other works, but although as a text it has nothing like the depth of the heavyweight trag-edies, this doesn't seem to matter in the least in the current production. Something heavy under advance works. here works, and works well.

Creation Theatre's productions are always of a high standard, originally and beautifully presented, and the magical quality of many of their shows makes them particularly accessible to children. This season, *The Comedy of Errors* comes to life under the more accessible to children. Inis season, Ine Comedy of Errors Comes to the Under the more than capable direction of Charlotte Conquest. The action in this case takes place in an unspecified time; in an almost magical 'Ephesus'. This, together with beautiful, sometimes outlandish costumes, add to the sense of unreality and allow the modern comic touches (Ephesus guidebooks, umbrellas used as swords, and an escape scene which this untutored reviewer reckons might have owed something to Rambo) to add seamlesly to the atmosphere rather than distracting attention from other aspects of the play.

It's unusual for me, and I'd hazard for more of us than would care to admit it, to be able to sit through two and a half hours of (unfamiliar) 16th century verse without get-ting tired out by the effort and eventually, dare I say it, sneaking a glance at the clock. For the duration of this show, nothing was further from my mind, and to be honest, the interval was even a bit of a distraction. The production did rely quite heavily on visual comedy, but the mix of beautifully choreographed slapstick, tongue-in-cheel visual comedy, but the mix of beautifully choreographed slapstick, tongue-in-cheek puppeteering, and the occasional improbable conjuring trick always remained just on the right side of overdone, and made for a heady evening of laugh-out-loud absorp-tion. Certainly, Conquest has clearly decided to not to play up the more serious side of the play; the bitter predicament of the condemned Egeon (Matthew Hendrickson), the original separation of the family; the anxieties of the abandoned wife Adriana (Amanda Haberland), but this doesn't mean to say that the production entirely tacks substance. A sterling cast - I hesitate to start mentioning them by name as 'I'll end up listing the lot - managed to bring more depth to their characters than was apparent in the script alone. The twins' distinct personalities were apparent from the first, and the contrast between Adriana and her sister Luicana (Amy Starcy) was affully broupt out.

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