

Oxford's DAILY INFO
Issue No. 7652

Thu 10th & Fri 11th November 2005 (5th Week)

www.dailyinfo.co.uk
Next issue: Sat 12th November
Deadline: 10am, Fri 11th November

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THEATRE REVIEW

TOP GUN

The Burton Taylor Theatre (Hill Sat 12th November)

When we first saw that they were doing *Top Gun* at the BT we wondered 'How?' and 'Why?' The appeal of the film is surely its almost pornographic love-affair with high-tech weaponry drenched in testosterone, not the paper-thin drama and characterisation. As the audience settled into their seats at the BT, the stage backdrop displayed the opening cue-card from the film, and I was half-expecting a *Rocky Horror* style live-action performance in front of video-projectors. What happened was much more fun. A bunch of grown boys (and girls) running around with their arms outstretched making plane noises (not always succeeding in keeping straight faces) while the audience collapsed in hysterics. The weird thing was, this stayed funny right through to the end. Unwittingly, it also worked rather well. We had a much better idea what was meant in terms of 3D aerial combat than when watching Tony Scott's frenetically edited flybys. Moreover, we had real surround sound - not the latest Dolby or THX, but actors all around us making piercing jet roars or emergency alarms. There was real claustrophobia and urgency when planes were in trouble.

The evening's experience was not unlike going to a Shakespeare play: every few minutes you hear something that you feel you've known all your life, but never realized it came from this source. OK, in this case it was cheesy '80s songs & absurd one-liners rather than great poetry, but it was a recurring sensation. It gave proceedings a pleasant feeling of nostalgia, calling up all manner of unfocused childhood memories.

This was no cynical post-modern production obsessed with irony or subversive revisionism (no room for Quentin Tarantino's notorious reinterpretation: 'It is a story about a man's struggle with his own homosexuality...'). Rather, it was in the mould of the scene in *Reign of Fire* when 'No Luke, I am your father' from *The Empire Strikes Back* is re-enacted with high seriousness as a sacred mythological - by two kids with buckets on their heads. The cast's brash celebration of the script's many guilty pleasures effortlessly sidestepped its inherent dramatic and logistical drawbacks - and the (mixed) audience was only too happy to be carried away in the moment.

Julian Stewart 08/11/05

EXHIBITION REVIEW

RUSSIAN ART
Oxford Town Hall, 9-12 November

For the second year running, Russian artists are exhibiting their work at Oxford Town Hall, as part of a major art and craft exhibition which includes both local and international artists. The most prolific - and most striking - part of the exhibit is miniature lacquer work, but there are also wood carvings, batik paintings, landscapes, tempera paintings, hand crafted bowls, Christmas decorations made of hickory bark, and of course a marvellous selection of matryoshka - the Russian dolls within dolls. There is one large and extremely beautiful icon of the Mother of God, but generally this is a secular exhibition. All items are for sale, at prices ranging from a few pence to thousands. Many of them are of museum quality, and potential collector's items.

This exhibition is a joint venture by Ludmilla Fishchuk, Russia's leading authority on its art - particularly the miniature painting on lacquer boxes - and the Friends of Khlovi, whose purpose is to support the Art School in the village of Khlovi. During the week there will be demonstrations of lacquer miniature painting by Zhena Grachev, President of Union of Master Artists, and of wood carving by Mikhail Dvornikov. It will be possible to discuss commissions.

Misha Dvornikov's carvings are utterly charming. Now in his early fifties, he was first attracted to working with wood at the age of eight, and so in a lifetime of experience goes into his work. It is in the traditional Russian folk genre - including bears who can be made to type on their computer keyboards, or play the piano. In a small 3-D nativity scene, Mary rocks the cradle of the Christ-child.

The really outstanding part of the exhibition, however, is the collection of lacquer miniatures. In lacquer work in the four villages in Russia which traditionally produce them, and it is interesting to compare the different styles. One, for example, developed its tradition through the influence of German snuff boxes, and the images are quite westernised. The other three villages were originally known for icon painting, and turned to subjects of landscape and folk tale when they were no longer allowed to produce religious art after the 1917-18 Revolution. Ironically, their livelihoods are once more threatened with the collapse of communism, since State funding has now been withdrawn.

The artistry of these miniatures is quite extraordinary, and it is worth taking time to study them with the magnifying glasses provided. There is a huge variety of styles and subjects, most of them extremely colorful: looking at them is like entering into a fairytale landscape. Besides the more traditional work there are some highly original images. In particular, Evgeny Grachev specialises in lacquer work in sepia tones, and one of the most beautiful boxes had a miniature painting of his grandmother's house which was like a very detailed sepia photograph, complete with washing out, chickens and a bicycle.

The exhibition is on just Saturday. Whether you wish to make an investment, buy a Christmas present, or simply spend an hour in another world, it is well worth a visit.

Jessica Rose, 09/11/05

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Jessica Rose, 09/11/05

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MEETINGS AND LECTURES

Thu 10th
REMEMBRANCE AT BLACKWELL'S BOOKSHOP / Max Author / Collection of accounts from WW1 survivors entitled 'Last Post' / 7pm, £2 to Poppy Appeal / Blackwells Bookshop. 48-51 Broad St. Tel: 292742

OPEN DOOR DROP-IN CENTRE / Drop-in centre for refugees & asylum seekers. 10-12pm. Free. Inception. www.st-gileschurch.org.uk / St Giles Church, Princes Street. Tel: 292168

SPEEDWELL SUPPORT GROUP / For anyone with serious illness. 10-12pm. Free. Inception. www.speedwell.org.uk / Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles. Tel: 292173

THURSDAY LUNCHTIME TALK / Ann Filling: Imaginary gardens with real roots. 12-1pm. Free. Inception. www.st-gileschurch.org.uk / St Giles Church, Princes Street. Tel: 292168

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI LECTURE / LECTURE. Max Hurler: The Philosophy of the Subject. 7pm. Free. Inception. www.st-antonyshall.org.uk / St Antony's College, Woodstock Rd. Tel: 284700

THE SCIENCE FORUM: STEM CELL RESEARCH / For your questions to Anne Diamond's research. £4.30pm. £6. £4 children. Oxford Playhouse. Boxroom. Tel: 303505. Fax: 303748. www.oxfordplayhouse.com

LLOYD GEORGE, THE FRENCH AND THE GERMANS / Specialist lecture. 7.30pm. £4.30. £2 children. Free possible. unless you're a University member / Exam School, High Street. Tel: 292168

THE SCIENCE FORUM: STEM CELL RESEARCH / For your questions to Anne Diamond's research. £4.30pm. £6. £4 children. Oxford Playhouse. Boxroom. Tel: 303505. Fax: 303748. www.oxfordplayhouse.com

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CINEMA

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Broken flowers starring Bill Murray

THE BEAT THAT MY HEART SKIPPED [15] Thu: 6.45, 8.45, 8.50pm
The beat that my heart skipped starring a concert pianist

SPYGLASS SCHELL [PG] Thu: 1.30, 3.30, 5.30, 7.30pm
Spyglass starring Tom Cruise

KISS KISS BANG BANG [15] Thu: 1.45, 4.10, 7.05, 9.15, 11.30pm
Kiss kiss bang bang starring Ben Stiller and Robert De Niro

WIT AT HEART [18] Thu: 7.00, 7.10, 7.15pm
Wit starring Emma Thompson

Ultimate Picture Palace (245288)

LAND OF THE DEAD [15] Thu: 8.30pm
Land of the dead starring Lance Reddick

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE [U] Thu: 4.30, 7.00pm
Pride and prejudice starring Jennifer Ehle

ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW [12A] Thu: 11.30pm
Rocky horror picture show starring Tim Curry

WIT AT HEART [18] Thu: 7.00, 7.10, 7.15pm
Wit starring Emma Thompson

Odeon George St (0871 2244 007)

CORPSE BRIDE [PG] Thu: 7.00, 7.10, 7.15pm
Corpse bride starring Tim Burton

IN HER SHOES [12A] Thu: 8.15pm, Sat: 2.30, 5.15, 8.10pm
In her shoes starring Julia Roberts

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE [U] Thu: 4.30pm
Pride and prejudice starring Jennifer Ehle

NANNY MCDIEMME [U] Thu: 1.15, 3.30, 6.30, 8.45pm
Nanny mcdiemme starring Angela Lansbury

WALLACE & GROMIT IN THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT [U] Thu: 1.30, 2.30, 3.45, 6.40, 8.15pm
Wallace & Gromit in the curse of the were-rabbit starring Wallace & Gromit

ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE [12A] Thu: 1.15, 5.50, 8.00pm
Elizabeth starring Cate Blanchett

THE BROTHERS GRIMM [12A] Thu: 1.30, 5.45, 8.30pm
The brothers grimm starring Matt Damon

THE LEGEND OF ZORRO [PG] Thu: 1.15, 5.00, 8.00pm
The legend of zorro starring Antonio Banderas

THE POLAR EXPRESS [U] Thu: 12.20, 2.40pm
The polar express starring Michael Douglas

ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE [12A] Thu: 1.15, 5.50, 8.00pm
Elizabeth starring Cate Blanchett

KISS KISS BANG BANG [15] Thu: 1.30, 3.30, 5.45, 8.40pm
Kiss kiss bang bang starring Ben Stiller

Odeon Magdalen St (0871 2244 007)

WALLACE & GROMIT IN THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT [U] Thu: 1.30, 2.30, 3.45, 6.40, 8.15pm
Wallace & Gromit in the curse of the were-rabbit starring Wallace & Gromit

SAW [18] Thu: 3.45, 6.40, 8.50pm
Saw starring Kevin Zalt

THE CONSTANT GARDENER [15] Thu: 2.10, 5.10, 8.10pm
The constant gardener starring Helen Mirren

CORPSE BRIDE [PG] Thu: 7.00, 7.10, 7.15pm
Corpse bride starring Tim Burton

Vue Cinema (0870 444 3030)
(formerly the Ozone Multiplex)

IN HER SHOES [12A] Thu: 8.15pm, Sat: 2.45, 5.30, 8.30pm
In her shoes starring Julia Roberts

WALLACE & GROMIT IN THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT [U] Thu: 1.30, 2.30, 3.45, 6.40, 7.00, 9.10pm, Fri: 1.30, 3.45, 6.00, 8.15pm
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THE CONSTANT GARDENER [15] Thu: 2.10, 5.10, 8.10pm
The constant gardener starring Helen Mirren

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THEATRE

Until Sat Nov 12th

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Wed: 7.30pm, Thu: 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Fri: 8pm
Fossil Footprints transfers tickets from a season of 100 tickets / £12

Burton Taylor Theatre (303505)
TOP GUN Thu 8th - Sat 12th Nov: 7.30pm
America's best fighter pilots have their skills on display. £5.00 (10)

THE OXFORD REVUE Thu 8th - Sat 12th Nov: 9.30pm
We show the best of Oxford's talents. £5.00 (10)

New Theatre (0870 6063500)
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY Wed 8th - Sun 13th Nov
English National Ballet. £15.00

The Theatre at Headington (759138)
The Reduced Shakespeare Company: COMPLETELY HOLLYWOOD SOLD OUT! (The 10th/8th)

Jaqueline Du Pré Building (276821)
DON GIOVANNI Thu 8th - Fri 11th Nov: 7.30pm
Hear the music and experience the downfall of the don Giovanni. £15.00 (10)

PUMPKIN SOUP Sat 11th Nov, 1pm, 3pm
An adaptation of Helen Cresswell's childrens book. £6

Old Fire Station Theatre (297170)
DESIGN FOR LIVING Thu 8th - Sat 12th Nov
Ned's Decadent Day. £10.00 (10)

Myosote Theatre Wadhams (277900)
IT'S TOO EARLY TO SAY Thu 10th - Sat 12th Nov
An evening of the company of the Savoy West End. 8.00pm £5

The Pegasus Theatre (722851)

HORSE HEAD Thu 10th Nov, 8pm. £15.50

ARCHER Thu 10th Nov, 8pm. £15.50

FETCH Sat 12th Nov, 8pm. £15.50

Fetch: singing, walking, baying and sniffing

review on dailyinfo.co.uk

CINEMA REVIEW

WALLACE & GROMIT IN THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT (U)
Dir: Nick Park, Steve Box
Peter Sallis, Ralph Fiennes, Helena Bonham Carter

In Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit, the movie's favourite Oscar-winning plasticine pals travel successfully onto the big screen. If *Chicken Run* was Nick Park's movie test-flight (in more ways than one), then *Were-Rabbit* is the real deal. Jack-packed with British humour and voice talent, and backed up with Dreamworks' lovely US dollars it's well, cracking.

Wallace - inventor and cheese enthusiast - together with his faithful dog Gromit, keep their northern town free of pests through their thriving business - Anti-Pesto. But on the eve of Tooting's Large Vegetable Show, the populace are suddenly threatened by a bunny of immense proportions. Can Wallace and Gromit catch it and save the town's carrots from disaster? Is Wallace only professionally interested in aristocrat Lady Tooting ('Totty')? And can Gromit outwit Wallace's dastardly rival? While waiting for answers, sit back and enjoy a flood of inventive animation, sight gags, and fast-paced action.

This is a Britain of allotments, tea, toothy vicars and Dixon of Dock-Green. And of Nick Park, who is a family-friendly artist's laid on with all the wit and intelligence we've come to expect from *Lardman Animation*. A refreshing change from the usual crop of motor-motored, crash-bang toot *Were-Rabbit* bows you along with a quirky story and a host of well-drawn (and well-moiled) characters. A good kid-flick, it's also a treat for grown-ups of all ages. With knowing references to *King Kong*, 30s horror films, 60s Hammer movies, even to *International Rescue*, it's also cheeky enough to chuck in some inoffensive seaside humour. Well, with all those marrows and cabbages, how could Park resist? And with a garden-theme, why not bring in a touch of *The Archers*, with Edward Kelsey lending his Joe Grundy voice as veg-lover Mr Growbag. Try spotting Ralph Fiennes, Helena Bonham Carter and the north's own Peter Kay too - not an easy task.

But if Dreamworks' pretty much left Nick Park to do his thing, they have at least provided a chucklesome short film before the main feature - just like the old days. If you saw *Madagascar* you'll have met them before - if you haven't don't worry, because *The Madagascar Penguins' Christmas Capers* requires no previous knowledge.

85 minutes in the company of Wallace & Gromit is always good fun - and *Were-Rabbit* doesn't disappoint. If our plasticine friends are a national treasure - and they are - then so is Peter Sallis, now in his 80s, who powers this movie along with an enthusiasm that belies his years. Come Oscar time, if W&G get another statue, let's hope it goes to Sallis' mantlepiece.

Glenn Watson 07.11.05

EXHIBITION REVIEW

RUSSIAN ART
Oxford Town Hall, 9-12 November

For the second year running, Russian artists are exhibiting their work at Oxford Town Hall, as part of a major art and craft exhibition which includes both local and international artists. The most prolific - and most striking - part of the exhibit is miniature lacquer work, but there are also wood carvings, batik paintings, landscapes, tempera paintings, hand crafted bowls, Christmas decorations made of hickory bark, and of course a marvellous selection of matryoshka - the Russian dolls within dolls. There is one large and extremely beautiful icon of the Mother of God, but generally this is a secular exhibition. All items are for sale, at prices ranging from a few pence to thousands. Many of them are of museum quality, and potential collector's items.

This exhibition is a joint venture by Ludmilla Fishchuk, Russia's leading authority on its art - particularly the miniature painting on lacquer boxes - and the Friends of Khlovi, whose purpose is to support the Art School in the village of Khlovi. During the week there will be demonstrations of lacquer miniature painting by Zhena Grachev, President of Union of Master Artists, and of wood carving by Mikhail Dvornikov. It will be possible to discuss commissions.

Misha Dvornikov's carvings are utterly charming. Now in his early fifties, he was first attracted to working with wood at the age of eight, and so in a lifetime of experience goes into his work. It is in the traditional Russian folk genre - including bears who can be made to type on their computer keyboards, or play the piano. In a small 3-D nativity scene, Mary rocks the cradle of the Christ-child.

The really outstanding part of the exhibition, however, is the collection of lacquer miniatures. In lacquer work in the four villages in Russia which traditionally produce them, and it is interesting to compare the different styles. One, for example, developed its tradition through the influence of German snuff boxes, and the images are quite westernised. The other three villages were originally known for icon painting, and turned to subjects of landscape and folk tale when they were no longer allowed to produce religious art after the 1917-18 Revolution. Ironically, their livelihoods are once more threatened with the collapse of communism, since State funding has now been withdrawn.

The artistry of these miniatures is quite extraordinary, and it is worth taking time to study them with the magnifying glasses provided. There is a huge variety of styles and subjects, most of them extremely colorful: looking at them is like entering into