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Issue No. 7213

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Next issue Fri 25th January  
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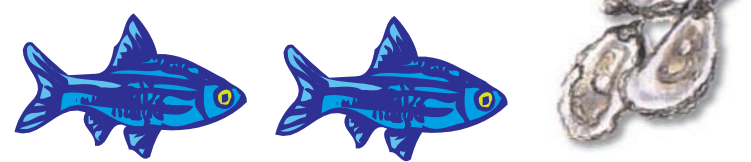


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MEETINGS

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SEMINAR SERIES:  
THE PINOCHET SERIES / Judge Baltasar Garzon, Spanish magistrate / 5.30pm Buttery / St Anthony's College, Woodstock Rd; Tel: 284700

VANISHED LIBRARIES / Prof Lapidge, Prof of English, Notre Dame / 5pm / Examination Schools, High St

SEMINAR SERIES: 'BRITAIN AND THE WAR WITH NAPOLEON' COBBETT AND THE FRENCH 1789-1815 / John STEVENSON, Worcester College, Oxford / 2.15pm / Maison Francaise, Northam Rd, Oxford; Tel: 274220, Email: maison@sable.ox.ac.uk

THIS HOUSE BELIEVES WAR CRIMES TRIALS ARE A VICTOR'S JUSTICE. / Pro: William Clegg QC, Peter Tatchell. Opp: Geoffrey Robertson QC, Lord Janner / 8.30 pm / Oxford Union, Frewin Court

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SILENCE by HAROLD PINTER

Burton Taylor Theatre to Saturday 26th  
Browning Version Productions / Experimental Theatre Company

Silence is a Beckettian portrayal of the aftermath and memories of an affair, the three protagonists sitting, separately, on a near empty stage. A difficult play to perform, with sparse stage directions leaving the actors bare to the audience, was handled with skill and maturity by director Andrew Leveson. The stage was sectioned into 3 cell-like spaces by way of a lightbulb above each chair. Each of the actors used the space well and Hedley Twidle as Rumsey, in particular, commanded attention for his lyrical musings. Hannah Croft's Ellen played the rare moments of enthusiasm and youth well, although at times this liveliness continued into the more introspective monologues. Andrew Millington as Bates dealt well with the gritty character, with perhaps a little too much reliance on the (ever important) pauses.

however, was a minor problem with an otherwise good production. The lighting, built up throughout the performance to cast a shadow behind each actor, echoed the increasing agitation of the characters. The action, played out in words, is at first in monologue, with gradual overlaps building into a hopeless repetition and exploration without conclusion.

This was a brave attempt at a play, made all the more difficult by the intimacy of the Burton Taylor venue, which meant that every movement and expression was obvious. Gestures which, in a larger venue, might be subtle, are accentuated by closeness of performance and audience. The lighting was faultless, the direction showed understanding of the build up of the play and the acting had moments of excellence. It is well worth taking 45 minutes to see this thoughtful production of Silence while it is being performed in the BT.



Robertson Foley 23/01/02

The rare moments of interaction were awkward, as the solitude built up was not contrasted with the contact. In a play where the silence is as important as the words spoken, the pauses were, at times, overemphasised. This is a play of communication - both what is said and what is left unsaid and the minimalist nature of the script may lead actors to over-compensate with facial and physical expressions that jar with the all important silence. This,

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EXHIBITIONS

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THEATRE

Old Fire Station 297170

HANSEL AND GRETEL Tue 22 - Sat 26  
Daily: 7.30pm Thu & Sat Mats: 2.30  
Adapted from the well-known fairy tale. / £8(£6)

Pegasus Theatre 722851

HOPE FOR HUMANITY Thu 24 - Fri 25. Daily: 6.30  
Oxfordshire schools explore themes of prejudice and tolerance. £3.50 (£2.00)

Playhouse 305305

LORD OF THE FLIES Wed 23 - Sat 26  
Daily: 1.30, 7.30 Fri: 7.30  
Pilot Theatre Company takes on William Golding's novel

Burton Taylor Theatre 305350

BASH BY NEIL LABUTE Tue 22 - Sat 26  
Daily: 7.30pm  
Three dark, edgy, satirical plays £5/£4

SILENCE BY HAROLD PINTER Tue 22 - Sat 26  
Daily: 9.30pm £5/£4  
Exploration of the mind.

Kennington Village Centre

RED RIDING HOOD Thu 17 - Sat 26.  
Daily: 7.30pm Sat: 2pm  
Panto

Moser Theatre, Wadham 277900

MOLIERE'S THE MISANTHROPIST Tue 22 - Sat 26  
Daily: 8pm  
New verse translation. £5 / £3

review: hansen and gretel

the old fire station to january 26th

No cosy, pantomime fare here; Hannah Madsen's *Hansel and Gretel* is happy with the darkness of the Brothers Grimm fairy tale, where cannibalism and infanticide snuggle up beside cuddly animals and loving sisters. Not that this makes it unsuitable for children; the two six-year-olds in the row in front of me thought it was a riot. Like any good fairy tale, it's stuffed with scares as well as laughs and delights: from the walk in, running a gauntlet of growling, masked, monstrous animals, to the final explosion of bubbles, gold and rose-scented smoke, this play steps easily from laugh to gasp to boggling wonder, spiking the familiar story of ineffectual fathers, scheming step-mothers, and hapless children with a cock-eyed, acid-tinged strangeness.



After a guest-star introduction by Dudley Sutton (who?), the story tunes in, accompanied by Jack White's original music, which started out sounding like a music box tuned by a drunk before defiantly getting stranger. Beneath the fairy-light stars, the actors prove they're funnier and more interesting

than the lights, staging, and the cake handed out at the interval (all excellent). Little Hansel (ludicrously bluff Simon Ross) hangs out with woodland spirits between hugs and tears, while Gretel (cheerfully brutal and wide-eyed Kate Fowler) tries to talk their bad luck to death. The animals whirl around them, dressing and redressing the willow-witly and paper set in a giddy round of stamping, flailing and random acts of construction. Look out also for evil birds, sinister lublubbies, a very odd tea party, several recipes for cooking children, nasty Marlene the glamorous witch, and gingerbread for everyone.

The performance feels like a summer festival show unaccountably gone astray in Oxford in January, or a strange child's play that's grown up very big and clever. Caution: contains strobe lights and may also contain nuts.

Jeremy Dennis 23/01/02

JOKE OF THE DAY (just you try not to laugh...)

Two brothers have a lifelong dream to immigrate to America. They work hard and save their money. After many years, they have saved enough money and finally emigrate into New York.

The first brother sets his hot dog in his lap, unfolds the paper wrapper, looks at his hot dog for a moment, and suddenly wraps it back up.

Before they begin building their new lives in America, they decide to see some of the famous places they dreamed of for so long; the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, the Rockettes, and others. Eventually, they make their way to Coney Island.

He then turns to his brother and says, "What part of the dog did you get?"

As they stroll down the beach, taking in all the newness of America, they see a very large billboard that reads: "HOT DOGS," with a big arrow pointing down to a little hot dog stand. Being hungry and seeing that having an American hot dog would be something new, they decide to try one. So they order two hot dogs and sit on a nearby bench to enjoy another piece of Americana.

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ON THIS DAY IN.....1885  
John Lee (the man they couldn't hang) survived three attempts to hang him at Exeter Prison, as the trap failed to open.

REVIEW : THEATRE

BASH

by NEIL LABUTE  
Burton-Taylor Theatre,

'Bash' is an evening of three half-hour plays with thematic and stylistic links. All take the form of monologues, the first and third are simply one person talking to an unseen listener, the second has no particular setting and consists of a couple's interlinked but separate recollections. All three share an informal, conversational style, but with a gradually darkening, confessional tone spiced with occasional humour.

The first piece is delivered by a distressed businessman with a dark secret, played by Sam Trounce. The second is a tale of innocence lost told by a couple, Hannah Murray and J. Van Tulken. The staging here is particularly effective, as they interact physically but their stories diverge, and a sense of repressed menace gradually builds. The third is a statement from a woman (Cat Ward, in the night's strongest performance) about the man who used to teach her, and her ambiguous feelings towards him.

The three demonstrated similar strengths and weaknesses. The acting was universally excellent, if rather too prone to historic shouting at times. The use of effects occasionally highlighted this problem. The lighting was used effectively in the second piece, fitting the changing scenes and more dream-like, placeless feel rather well. The other two monologues used light to signify changes not of setting but of mood or emotional intensity. However, with these transitions being more than adequately conveyed by script and actor, this heavy-handed underscoring served only to detract from the performances. The sound, too, was of mixed value, subtly haunting in the final piece, somewhat arbitrary and distracting in the first.

The scripts and acting were more than enough to brush these complaints aside, however, and the result was an unsettling, thought-provoking production showcasing real talent

Alex Williams 22/01/02