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We set aside £10 each week to reward ideas for making Dailyinfo more profitable / effective. If we incorporate your idea (or if we don't, but think it's worth a consolation prize) we'll send you the amount accumulated in the kitty.
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It now (22/10/03) stands at £50!
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Until Thurs 30th October

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INTERSTELLA 5555(PG) Fri: 10.15, 11.30 Sat: 9.45, 11.15 Sun: 2.00, 4.00, 9.45 Mon - Thu: 9.45
70s style animation with Daft Punk music
MYSTIC RIVER (18) Fri: 3.15, 6.00, 9.00 Sat, Sun, Tues, Weds: 3.15, 6.00, 8.45 Mon: 12.30, 3.15, 9.10 Thu: 3.15, 6.00, 8.45, 11.30 Clint Eastwood directs.
ROGER DODGER (15) Fri: 11.45pm Sat: 11.30pm Sun: 12 noon
A smooth talker sets out to show his young nephew how to win with women.
SPELLBOUND (U) Fri: 1.50, 3.50, 8.20 Sat: 1.00, 3.10, 5.20, 7.30 Sun: 5.20, 7.30 Mon: 3.10, 5.20, 7.30 Tue & Wed: 1.00, 3.10, 5.20, 7.30 Thu: 1.00, 3.10, 7.30
Documentary about US Spelling bees
KIDS CLUB: PIGLETS' BIG MOVIE (U) Sat: Sun 12.45, film 1.30 WTP's sidekick gets the limelight.
BELLEVEILLE RENDEZVOUS (12A) Sun: 2.25 Mon - Wed: 1.15 Thu: 1.15, 5.30
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LEON MORIN, PRETRE (U) Sun: 12 noon Mon: 6.45
Trials of a young priest
IGBY GOES DOWN (15) Thursday: 11.15pm
Precocious New Yorker, erm... does stuff.
Ultimate Picture Palace: 245288
Contact venue for details.

Odeon George Street: 0870 5050007
FINDING NEMO (U) Daily: 12.50, 3.25, 6.00, 8.35
Rescuing nice fish
CALENDAR GIRLS (12A) Daily: 12.00, 2.30, 5.15
Yorkshire Women's Institute bare all for a good cause.
THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN (12A) Daily: 12.25, 3.10, 5.55, 8.40
Alan Moore's excellent graphic novel is brought to the screen.
KILL BILL (18) Daily: 12.40, 3.15, 6.05, 8.30, 8.45
Tarantino's return
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY (12A) Daily: 12.15, 2.40, 5.30, 8.05
Cohen Brothers produce fun rather than depth.
SECONDHAND LIONS (12A) Daily: 12.10, 2.35, 5.05, 7.55
Timid youth dumped on eccentric uncles.
SENIOR SCREEN: VERONICA GUERIN (18) Wed: 10.25
One journalist vs the Irish gangs

Odeon Magdalen Street: 0870 5050007
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Rescuing nice fish
BAD BOYS 2 (15) Daily: 1.30, 4.30, 8.10
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PBFA BOOKFAIR / See 'Coming', top left

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PARISFAL Sat 25: 4.30pm
The pure fool saves the day. £15-£56
FRED DINAH Sun 26: 7.30
Famous steeplejack discusses his life. £12-50
OH WHAT A NIGHT Tue - Thu: 7.30pm Fri & Sat: 6pm & 9pm
With Kid Creole. £10-£22.50

Old Fire Station Theatre 297170
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The media shape us
THE COUNTRY Tue 28 - Sat 1: 7.30pm, plus Sat 2.30

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FROM CALIBAN TO THE TALIBAN Thu 23: 8pm
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Oxford Playhouse 305305
EUROPE Fri 24: 8.00 Sat 25: 2.30, 7.30
A crumbling station in Eastern Europe. By David Greig £7-£12. Review above right
HUMBLE BOY Mon 27 - Sat 1
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Burton Taylor Theatre 305305
SHAKESPEARE'S PHILOCTETES Tue 21 - Sat 25
Daily: 7.30pm
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VIVA SALSAL! at the Jam Factory, Park End Street, Oxford, 9pm: Beginners' class; 10pm-2am: dancing. Entry: £5 b4 11pm

MEETINGS/LECTURES

Fri 24th
OXFORD STOP AIDS CAMPAIGN / Oxford Stop AIDS Campaign launch, with speakers and drinks / 8pm, free entry & drinks! / www.oxfordstopaids.org.uk / Roy Griffiths Room, ARGO Building, Keeble College
CLARENDON LAW LECTURES 2003 / Professor Carol Harlow will lecture on Perspectives on State Liability / Oxford University Press / 17.00 - 17.50 & 18.20 - 19.00 / Faculty of Law, St Cross Building, St Cross Road
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OPERA REVIEW

Il Trovatore
Giuseppe Verdi
Welsh National Opera
New Theatre, Fri 24th

A tale of tragedy, doomed love, brave men and passionate women, swordfights and last minute rescue attempts, Il Trovatore is the ultimate Romantic opera, and the Welsh National Opera release its passion in torrents.

The three main characters, The Count di Luna, his rival, Manfredo, and the woman they both love, Leonora, alone make the opera worth going to see. David Rendall in particular is a world-class vocalist; his mellow Manfredo carried some of the most beautiful moments in the whole opera with ease. Yuri Nechaev, as Count Di Luna, provided a subtle portrait of a man tormented by an all-consuming jealousy which blinds him to the reality around him, and ultimately sweeps him along in the desire for revenge. And, despite a rather cold start, Elena Lasovaskaya too confirmed a fantastic carrying voice that soon took on delectable silvery tones, and did full justice to the vocal fireworks that the role of Leonora demands.

And what fireworks. In the true tradition of the Bel Canto opera, Verdi demands a combination of explosive runs, rapid trills and vertigo-inducing high notes from most of the main characters, and melting harmony, sonority and energy from the chorus and orchestra. The WNO fulfil these requirements with style.

The soloists' main rival for best performance of the night goes, unusually, to the orchestra, under the magic baton of Alberto Hold-Garido. They were confident, dynamically sensitive and blended within an inch of their lives to a creamy, full-bodied, sound that added richness to the choruses and arias alike. They gave rise to some fantastic moments when, with the orchestra swelling under them, the singers' voices lifted up and soared, giving us true Romantic opera at its best.

So, what's the plot? The answer is: it doesn't matter. Il Trovatore is a fabulous tale of mistaken identity and dramatic passion that could only lose its colour and excitement in the telling. The best way to find out what happens is to go to tomorrow's performance and hear it for yourself; for those who don't happen to speak Italian, don't worry, the subtitles provide a continuous translation.

The Welsh National Opera have once again combined a handful of truly world-class soloists with their beautifully honed choir and orchestra to create a Belgian truffle of a performance; a warm, rich, melt-in-the-mouth sound that does full justice to the soaring lyricism of one of the last truly great Bel Canto operas. Not to be missed!

Isabel Owen, 23.10.03

THEATRE REVIEW

EUROPE

by David Greig

Oxford Playhouse until Sat 25th

I'd been looking forward to seeing David Greig's 'Europe' since I first heard it was being put on by a group of some of the "finest actors from Oxford University". I must also admit that hearing the cast described in that way really made me want them to fail and produce a lacklustre piece of theatre.

As problems for the cast began to mount, it looked as if my desire would be fulfilled. A cast member was sacked, costumes weren't bought until the week of the performance, the director, Ilan Goodman was taking a role in the play as Stationmaster Fret and a set designer was only found a week before the play. To say that the play has been dogged by problems would be a bit of an understatement. But is it any good?

Europe tackles themes that are deeply rooted in the idea of National and Cultural identity. Set in an anonymous Eastern European village, the story of a small group of characters is played out on both a grand and an intimate scale. Greig cleverly makes scenes about specific characters simultaneously play out the story of nations with gripping intensity. In addition, the play stands up here to what director Goodman has imposed on the text. I only wish that he'd been more brave with the staging - the cast seemed to be fighting against a near empty auditorium and cavernous set. The play cries out for an intimate setting and for actors to try using native accents to make the characters more specific.

Other drawbacks are that Goodman mistakenly makes his character, Fret, a comic role. The frustrated Stationmaster is an example of a man who has been left bewildered and baffled by progress. He plays to the audience with his whining voice and shuffling walk. Polly Findlay (assistant director and also the dreamer Adele) and Kate Fowler (Katia) turn in adequate performances that occasionally reach the intensity that Greig's superb writing deserves. It was a bit of a shame that Fowler kept turning her r's into w's - some of the most beautiful and bewitching city names in Europe were rendered amusing by her pronunciation.

I encourage you to go and catch Europe - it's a thoughtful play, adequately acted. The play's themes deserve attention and the lyrical writing will probably be some of the best presented by OUDS this season.

Ben Whitehouse, 23.10.03

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