

THURSDAY 31ST MAY 2001 (6TH WEEK)

COMING

THE SOUND OF THE PIANO / Piano recital by Georges Sokol. FREE ADMISSION / 1.05pm / Christ Church Cathedral, Thursday 31st May / www.thesoundofthepiano.com
GREENPEACE SUMMER FAIR. 10am-4pm, Saturday 2nd June, Wesley Memorial Hall. Vegetarian Buffet - Green Products.

BANDS, DISCOS, LIGHTS

DISCO, PA. AND Lighting equipment - hire and sales. 118 Cowley Road, 722027
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REVIEW: THEATRE

ROMEO & JULIET, by William Shakespeare
Old Fire Station until Saturday 2nd June.

Much of Shakespeare is awash with contrivance, more apparent even in the tragedy compelled to conceal its impetus than the comedy that thrives on its own shamelessness - and few plays, Shakespeare's included, are more innately contrived than *Romeo and Juliet*. All too few of its directors have ever dared use this dense intricacy to its advantage, opting instead, with little success, to smother it with distractions: an over-abundance of music, never-ending fight scenes, or, worst of all, unnecessary stage indulgence - as when the RSC recently had Juliet sitting on a swing for tediously long periods of what is already a long play, and all too readily a tedious one.



The leads, rarely together, shine best alone. Kuang Liu's Romeo is little short of perfect - requisitely handsome, as sharp in his wit as in the self-pity from whose wallowing he abstains beautifully. Juliet (Bethan Jones) grows more convincing with time: initially Shakespeare's fragile, but never puerile, thirteen-year-old, swiftly developing into Romeo's equal in every sphere, from wordplay to maturity of suffering. Teenage angst is banished from the stage, and rightly so, what invades it instead is strikingly counter-poised high tragedy and comedy scenes that had their audience in hysterics: Paul O'Mahony's Mercutio is a pure delight, Benvolio equally so. Lawrence, a welcome chorus and the Nurse - short, loud, garrulous - all add to a triumph of understated capability. Flashes of genius abound, and what is self-inflicted is well-intentioned, and what is brought off cries out to be seen - the rescue of a great play from the doldrums of directorial idleness.

short-lived but indicative of this production's potential, given a little more ambition.

There are, inevitably, quibbles - from scene changes so grotesquely cumbersome they might be funny were they not so tragic, to the obscenity that is the noise from the OFS club, disfiguring the ending and an insult to the actors. But what is self-inflicted is well-intentioned, and what is brought off cries out to be seen - the rescue of a great play from the doldrums of directorial idleness.

John Wyndham, 28-05-01

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CINEMA
Until Thursday 31st May

Odeon Magdalen Street 0870 5050007
THE MUMMY RETURNS (12)
Daily: 11.30am, 2.30, 5.30, 8.30
More special effects terror in the desert.
PEARL HARBOUR (12) From Thur 31st
Booking soon.

Odeon George Street
CLOSED FOR REFURBISHMENT

Ultimate Picture Palace 245288
CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON (12)
Daily: 6.30, 8.50
Award-winning action romance.

Phoenix Picture House 512526
CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN (15)
Daily: 1.15, 3.40, 6.20, 9.00
Famous mediterranean wartime romance.
BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY (15) Daily: 5.00, 9.10;
The famous singleton on screen.
THE DISH (12) Daily: 3.00, 7.00;
Comedy: a remote Australian antenna assists the first moon landing.
SPY KIDS (U) Daily: 1.10;
Children join in to save their spy parents.
CULT CINEMA: THE NINTH CONFIGURATION (15)
Thur 31st 11.30pm
A cross between *Shack Corridor* and *The Twilight Zone*.
PROOF OF LIFE (15) Thur 31st 11.30pm
High octane suspense drama.

THEATRE
St John's College Auditorium
THE SOUND OF MUSIC
Thur 31st May-Sat 2nd June 7.30;
Thur and Sat mats. 2.30
Rodgers and Hammerstein. Thursday matinee to be a sing-a-long performance.

Apollo Theatre 0870 606 3500
WEST SIDE STORY
Thur 31st May - Sat 9th June 7.30;
Mats. Wed 30th, Sat 2nd, Wed 6th and Sat 9th 2.30;
No Perf Sun's.

Bernstein's American Romeo and Juliet.

Old Fire Station 794490
ROMEO AND JULIET
Thur 31st May - Sat 2nd June 7.30;
Thur and Sat mats. 2.30
Shakespeare's classic love story.

Playhouse 798600
THE MISER
Thur 31st May and Sat 2nd June: 2.30, 7.30;
Fri 1st June 8pm
Ranjit Bolt's adaptation of Moliere's comedy.

Burton Taylor Theatre 793797
NEWS OF THE WORLD
Thur 31st May - Sat 2nd June 7.30
A dark comedy of manufactured news.
THE ZOO STORY Thur 31st May - Sat 2nd June 9.30
Two strangers meet in a park, with fatal consequences.

Pegasus Theatre 722851
YERMA Thur 31st May - Sat 2nd June 8pm
A childless woman drawn into a twilight world of ritual.

Christ Church Cathedral Gardens
THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE
Thur 31st May - Fri 1st June 7.15;
Sat 2nd June 3.15, 7.45
CS Lewis in the open air.

CONCERTS

Thursday 31st May
THE SOUND OF THE PIANO / Piano recital by Georges Sokol. Admission free. / 1.05pm / Christ Church Cathedral
THE CHAPEL CHOIR OF THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE: MUSIC FOR A SUMMER EVENING / Mozart Coronation Mass followed by madrigals £6/£3 / 8:15pm / The Queen's College, High St, OX1 4AW; Tel: 279194; Fax: 790819

GIGS + NIGHTLIFE

Thursday 31st May
KARL DEMATA / Blues Guitar / 11pm-2am / Freud's, Walton Street; Tel: 311171, Fax: 311171
PETE CALLARD / Jazz guitar. £4/£2.50 concs. / Doors 8.15pm, Music 9pm. / The Spin@The Wheatsheaf, Wheatsheaf Alley, 129 High Street; Tel: 243276
PANIC / Indie/alternative club night. £4/£3 before 11pm / 10pm-2am / Club Latino, The Plain Roundabout

MEETINGS

Thursday 31st May
PHILOSOPHY DISCUSSION GROUP / Free thinking and free coffee / 6.30pm / Borders bookshop, 9, Magdalen St, Oxford OX1 3AD; Tel: 203901
OXFORD ARTHURIAN SOCIETY / Speaker meeting / 8pm / Hertford College, Catte St; Tel: 279400
THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THE SECRET SERVICE ARE MAKING A MOCKERY OF DEMOCRACY / Pro: David Shaylor, Rupert Allason. Con: Oleg Gordievsky, Alan Judd. / 8.30pm, emergency debate 7.45pm / Oxford Union, Frewin Court
RESOLVING CUSTODY DISPUTES BETWEEN NAMED PARENTS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND SRI LANKAN LAW / Prof. Sharya Scharenguvel Visiting Fellow / 5:00 / Balliol College, Broad St; Tel: 277777
COPTIC MUSIC FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE / With Balázs Déri. Oxford Hungarian Society. Contributions suggested, i.e. £5 per term. / 8pm / Oriol College, Oriol Square; Tel: 276555
THE MAD COW CRISIS / Prof S Prusiner / 4pm / University Museum of Natural History, Parks Rd, Oxford
VOLTAIRE'S MONKEY BUSINESS: CANDIDE AND ITS ILLUSTRATORS / Paul O LeClerc / 5pm / Taylor Institution
TO BE ANNOUNCED / Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, QC / 5.45pm / St Cross Building

JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS

HELP SCIENCE AND HAVE FUN!
Interesting computer experiment, mean pay £ 7-8 (range: £4 - £18), mid June. Investigator: Dr. Zizzo, Dept Economics, Oxford University.
For info: md.islam@economics.ox.ac.uk, (2)73595,(2)80280

WORK FROM HOME! F/T P/T (Business Opportunity) www.homeworkheaven.co.uk
CHORAL SINGERS WANTED, city church, all parts, especially tenors. Also Fauné Requiem. Regular payment. (01865) 763281. richard@remollesfreeserve.co.uk
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STUDENT WANTED TO read / discuss 'things that really matter'. £5 hourly Mrs Hall 01865-516158.
ANALYST / PROGRAMMERS REQUIRED in Oxford for varied software development. Salary up to 28K. See http://www.ctsu.ox.ac.uk/~jobs/ for further details. Deadline 4th June.
£10 IN HMV/Waterstones vouchers for 2hr experiment to hear voices. Contact jason.chan@psyox.ac.uk,tel 271307
ENGLISH TEACHERS REQUIRED to teach groups of Japanese students from mid-July to late September. Must have a degree and TEFL qualification, min 3 years experience and lots of enthusiasm. We pay £20/hour. Call David at 841444 or send CV to david@oxford-intl.demon.co.uk or Oxford International Exchange, 11 Osborne Close, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 1TU.
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EXHIBITIONS

UNSEEN TREASURES / Previously undiscovered old master drawings. Ends 22nd July. / Christ Church Picture Gallery, Christ Church (entrance via Canterbury Gate / Oriol Square) Opening times : Mon-Sat 10.30-1.00, 2.00-4.30, Sun 2.00-4.30 (Easter-end Sept closes 5.30); Tel: 276172, Fax: 202429
STEVE HURST AND GEORGE LITTLE / Ends 17th June. / Christ Church Picture Gallery, Christ Church (entrance via Canterbury Gate / Oriol Square)

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Port Meadow
Oxford from the Meadow
Public bathing authorised 1852
During World War I, the Air Force camped on the Meadow, & had an airfield at the Northern end
Charles I rode this way with an army of 5,500, in 1644 escaping from Cromwell
Early Iron Age settlements
In 1768, jockeys claimed the Meadow was the best flat race course in Europe
Victorians skating on the Meadow
Bronze Age hoard found 1830
PORT MEADOW

Disputes between Oxford and Wolvercot over the ownership of Port Meadow raged from the 13th to the 20th century. The Abbot of Godstow several times blocked the main burgesses' entrance (then by Aristotle Lane) and was required by law to repair it. By 1970, grazing rights established by 130 Wolvercot householders (entitled to graze anything from a few geese to 60 head of cattle each) outweighed those established by Oxford Freeman. However, once a year the Sheriff of Oxford would ride out with the Freeman to impound the animals. They were then given back to their owners on payment of a £3 fine. The date changed from year to year, and was kept a strict secret beforehand. The Sheriff usually conducted operations from horseback, except for one in the early sixties who, as a member of the RAF, preferred to do so from a helicopter.

While Port Meadow is now common land, tempers still run high when there is any suggestion of change or development. Not only do the local residents enjoy the possibility of country walks just beyond their back gates, but the ecology of the boggy ground, left virtually untouched for hundreds of years, is of great interest to naturalists. The closest the meadow ever came to planned development was in the harsh winter of 1860-1. A subscription was raised to provide work for the poor, which took the form of building walks on the meadow. Sir Richard Cresswell intended to carry on the work at his own expense and planned a circuit of walks, planted with willows and flower borders. Opposition from the Freeman of the City prevented him from doing this.

Now used by private horse owners and riding schools, the meadow was for centuries a popular site for horse racing, and its peak of excellence in 1768 was the result of work paid for by the Duchess of Marlborough. By the mid 18th century the race meetings had become important social occasions, estimated to be worth £2,000 to the city in trade. The last race meeting was held in 1880, after 40 years of disputes over rights to use the meadow.

Port Meadow provides some of the most picturesque easy walks within reach of central Oxford. Best of all, by walking away from Oxford along the West side of the meadow, one encounters first the Perch, and then, by walking all the way to Godstow, the Trout, both of which are fine old-fashioned pubs which serve excellent food. The meadow has just been reopened after being closed as a foot-and-mouth precaution; with the weather continuing fine, it is hard to imagine a better time to explore the delights of one of Oxford's finest open spaces.

THEATRICAL NEEDS
ARTISTIC AND MUSICAL Directors sought for G&S Society productions of *Yeomen of the Guard* (Michaelmas 2001) and *Princess Ida* (Hilary 2002 - possible OFS show). Contact alison.kinder@exeterox.ac.uk ASAP
AUDITIONS FOR TOM Thumb at the Edinburgh Fringe on Fri 1st June 1-5pm and Sat 2nd June 2-7pm at St Hilda's. (Directions in lodge)Details 07779 641235

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