

# What's On

# Weekend

## Highlighting comedy while addressing moral issue

PANTOMIME came early to the city with this quite stunning performance of Rossini's effervescent and light-hearted take on the Cinderella story.

Lynne Hockney's revival of Peter Hall's 2005 staging perfectly complements the score, highlighting the comedy while gently addressing the moral issue, in a fluffy confection significantly enhanced by the elegance of both costumes and set.

Particularly effective was the simple fashion in which the ensembles were given – essentially static, but where the singers' back-projected and somewhat distorted shadow images created sufficient visual interest.

Of course, this had the added advantage of allowing the characters the time they needed to dispatch Rossini's tongue-twisting patter unhindered.

It would be difficult to pick a highlight from this cast of pure excellence. Allyson McHardy's Cenerentola successfully car-

### REVIEW Philip R Buttall

GLYNDEBOURNE ON TOUR: LA CENERENTOLA  
Theatre Royal Plymouth

Performances end tonight

ried off her role's transformation, while turning in a virtuoso vocal performance crowned by her spectacular final aria. Luciano Botelho (Don Ramiro) had a bel canto delivery to die for, with top Ds easily in his range, with Joan Martin-Royo's Dandini providing the perfect foil.

Jonathan Veira was at his comic best as Don Magnifico, but just as able to bring his fine voice to the part when needed.

With equally outstanding supporting roles and chorus-singing, and the first-rate orchestral contribution under Enrique Mazzola, where the woodwind really came into their own, this superlative production should prove a very hard act to follow.



## Director's vision is complex

### REVIEW Philip R Buttall

GLYNDEBOURNE ON TOUR: L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA  
Theatre Royal Plymouth

One performance only

MONTEVERDI'S last opera was premiered in 1643, at a time when the art form was in its very infancy, both dramatically and musically.

For this reason, perhaps, director Robert Carsen, who has described the work as 'without doubt the sexiest piece ever written', rigorously imposed his own personal interpretation on the production in its tour revival by Bruno Ravella.

There is in fact little suggestion that the composer intended the opera to be as much political as erotic. The fascinating score stands so well on its own, with moments of intense poignancy, enhanced by some glorious harmonic suspensions, contrasted with high-spirited frolics and energetic period dances.

Here the orchestra, directed from the keyboard by Jonathan Cohen, is absolutely first-rate, combining a taut sound with effective improvisatory elements, and all cloaked in the distinctive timbre of a Baroque ensemble.

In a particularly strong cast, the singing is equally impressive throughout, with especially distinguished performances by Christiane Karg and Lucia Cirillo as Poppea and Nerone respectively, and the usual strong support from the Glyndebourne chorus.

Michael Levine's sparse set is fine if red is your favourite colour – massive red drapes, chairs, red wine and, of course, the outfit worn by the ubiquitous Amore, popping up everywhere as if to hammer home the apparent significance of Love in Robert Carsen's seemingly rather convoluted view.

You'd probably just love it, or hate it.

## Stupendous production is among best yet

DIRECTORS often like to make a well-known opera their own, by sometimes pointlessly updating the location or period or adding all manner of elaborate sets and gimmicks.

Ashley Dean's tour revival of Jonathan Kent's original conception has its fair share of this, with its late 1950s-look characters and essentially simple, yet wonderfully resourceful, revolving and opening set.

The Commendatore is no longer a statue when he comes back to haunt the Don before dragging him off to hell, but now a blood-stained zombie rising from his tomb. There is a delicate snowfall during the Don's Act 2 serenade, and you get a sneak preview of the

### REVIEW Philip R Buttall

GLYNDEBOURNE ON TOUR: DON GIOVANNI  
Theatre Royal

No further performances

final engulfing flames at the end of the Act 1 finale, but the tremendous quality of the singing and playing in this quite stupendous production ensures you scarcely notice these revisions, effective as indeed they all are.

Audrun Iversen cuts a most impressive figure as the new-look Don, with a fine

singing voice and presence to match, feeding off the comic repartee from Robert Gleadow's equally impressive Leporello.

Natasha Jouhl (Donna Anna) and Nicole Heaston (Donna Elvira) both make telling contributions, with Eliana Pretorian's Zerlina one of the real highlights.

Strong supporting roles and chorus-singing, and outstanding orchestral playing under Jakub Hrusa's intelligent direction, particularly some most effective continuo work, all combine to make this one of Glyndebourne's most enjoyable productions to date.

## Indie film night is in action

PLYMOUTH'S Indie film night has its first full session tomorrow after last month's successful launch.

Film student Allister Gall's project, Imperfect Cinema 1, has Duncan Reekie as guest at Jack Chams in Ebrington Street.

Reekie will be showing his films and talking about his work. The Exploding Cinema founder inspired former Plymouth Raider Allister's PhD project at the University of Plymouth.

The night will also feature screenings of 'open reel' films. Allister said: "We have films already made for the night and I am excited to see what else we can come up with."

The search is also on for anybody who wants to contribute and collaborate.

"We need someone or some people to make a poster for the upcoming show, documentary filmmakers to film the night, editors to work on ongoing Imperfect Cinema projects and film-makers and crew to make the manifesto," said Allister.

You can find out more at [www.imperfectcinema.com](http://www.imperfectcinema.com)

## When the levee breaks

WHEN Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005 we all saw on our TV screens the extensive flooding and damage caused by this horrendous natural disaster.

The Theatre Centre Company, with just four actors, have shown not only the physical damage to the city but the emotional havoc that affected the population and how it brings out the best and the worst in people.

The Day The Waters Came is a harrowing account of the devastation, told by a teenage survivor, Maya, played with moving simplicity by Amber Cameron.

The other actors, Shane Frater, Darlene Charles and Uriah Manning, using their considerable mime and physical theatre skills, show the loss and desolation.

### REVIEW Pat Lower

THE DAY THE WATERS CAME  
Drum, Theatre Royal Plymouth

Performances end tonight

Playing frightened toddlers, over-worked medical staff, looters, and grumpy, stubborn old folk, they represent the people of New Orleans.

On a bare stage with just a submerged house and using simple props they convey the horror, humour and fear at finding themselves perched on rooftops, floating in water next to bloated dead bodies and not knowing when or if help is coming.

Director Natalie Wilson and choreographer Alesandra Seutin



have produced a compelling piece of theatre, helped enormously by the evocative soundscape of Dan Steel.

The script is spare and at times bleakly poetic – writer Lisa Evans has shown very clearly how the effects of a natural disaster can be

compounded by the neglect of the local and national agencies that are meant to help, and although President George W Bush acknowledged the failures of his Government, we are still left with the impression that poor people don't matter.

## TONIGHT

STAGE  
Glyndebourne On Tour – La Cenerentola, Rossini's comedy opera, main theatre, and The Day The Waters Came, New Orleans, post-Hurricane-Katrina drama, Drum, Theatre Royal Plymouth (both end tonight).

MUSIC  
Leftfield, Plymouth Pavilions.

FILM  
The Wildest Dream (PG), documentary on Mount Everest pioneers, The Kids Are All Right (15), comedy-drama with Julianne Moore, Annette Benning and Mark Ruffalo, Plymouth Arts Centre (until Thurs)