



KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Gone (with the wind)

It's over, the musical of the film of the book of the myth of the 'Old South' has crashed into oblivion and joined the great pantheon of theatrical failures. Yes, the idiots who decided to turn *Gone With The Wind* into a musical have had to close it due to everyone else's lack of interest. It's not the first time that bright ideas have turned out to be as dim as a blown out candle when headbutted by reality, but every time it happens I just have to laugh.

At least *Gone With The Wind* lasted longer than *All Bob's Women*, which disappeared so fast that it left nothing but a bad smell and posters on the underground. But few can match the theatrical car crash that was *Fields of Ambrosia*.

This American bright idea was all about a woman on death row and the efforts of a reformed executioner to save her from frying in the electric chair. It went down well in New York, but not in the West End, where even the most low-rent theatre critic loathed it. It staggered along for 23 performances before good taste got the better of it, 22 performances too late for most people. But there's worse to come.

Now that World War Two is disappearing into memory the coke-fuelled crazies are crawling out of their bunkers with whole new lows in the taste stakes. We've had *Sophie's Choice -The Opera* and now we are going to have *Imagine This*. Well, I'd rather not imagine a fun-filled musical about life in the Warsaw Ghetto. I don't care if it comes with high-kicking Nazi stormtroopers or if there's a tender love song as the hero is dragged off to a death camp, I still think it stinks. Maybe the weird and deranged writers who came up with this one don't realise that *Springtime for Hitler* is meant to be a joke. Then again, maybe that's their next easily missable production.

All is not lost in the land of the musical, not when the future holds *Brokeback Mountain: The Musical*, something that will be so seriously camp on more than one level that the only thing to do will be to buy a tent.

Rare breed spotted

By Ann Bronkhorst

Artists aren't rare in East Finchley; last month's Open House weekends revealed more than 40 of them. But it is rare today to meet an artist who is the founder of a group with political as well as artistic significance.

Charles Thomson, who lives and paints in a 19th century cottage in East Finchley, is the founder of The Stuckists, a few like-minded artists who agreed, in 1999, that they were opposed to much fashionable conceptual art. "We were," he says, "contrary to and defiant of the whole art establishment." Now the movement is international and has a place in art history.

Petition to Prime Minister

Two issues continue to be the focus for Stuckists' mockery and anger: the Turner Prize (remember those demonstrators dressed as clowns?) and the Tate. Sir Nicholas Serota, Tate Galleries' director for 20 years, is strongly criticised by the Stuckists, who have exposed the Tate's purchase of its own trustees' work. Charles Thomson claims Sir Nicholas "regularly extracts large sums of money from the government and members of the public on the pretext of buying art that meets a public demand". By the end of August the next director must be appointed, or perhaps reappointed, so Charles has set up a public petition to the



Stuckist founder Charles Thomson challenges Tate director. Photo by Ann Bronkhorst

Conjure up the magic of theatre

This summer brings a unique opportunity to learn about one of the backstage crafts that create the magic of theatre: Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts is running an exciting one-week course about the art and technical skills of theatre lighting design.

Keen beginners or those with basic experience will be able to get their hands on professional lighting equipment and enjoy the chance to put on a full-scale production.

Famous names who have been through Mountview's doors include Connie Fisher, star of *The Sound of Music*, and Leanne Jones, who won a best actress award for her role in *Hairspray*.

The course is being run by lighting director Matt Veitch, who lives in Kitchener Road. He's passionate about what he does and convinced that the course could open the door to many a successful career.

"Lighting is an essential part of stage design. It creates mood and atmosphere and helps you conjure up some incredible images. It's about dark and shadow as much as it is about colour," he said.

"This course is for someone who wants to gain some practical know-how. We'll help students understand electricity and they'll get their hands on the lighting kit, as well as designing for a show."

Courses run in the first two weeks of August but Mountview plans to run more in the near future. The academy is not far away, between Alexandra Palace and Wood Green. For more details, contact 020 8826 9217, email cadev@mountview.org.uk or visit www.mountview.org.uk.



Matt Veitch. Photo by John Lawrence

Prime Minister not to approve Sir Nicholas's reappointment.

"We paint pictures"

Stuckism is a steady guerrilla campaign, not a charge at the barricades. Charles may be scathing about much in the contemporary Art scene but he has a mild manner and a sense of humour. After art school he rejected art and for 13 years wrote and performed poetry, often in schools and on radio and TV. But in 1997, he says, "Art came back" and by art he means, above all, painting.

"We paint pictures" is his simple statement about the group's work: not installations, concepts or stunts. And the pictures have to have meaning, convey feeling and be understandable, whether or not they appeal to the viewer. Charles says: "Art should be life-enhancing. This stuff," (Brit Art, for example) "is life depleting."

To check out the Stuckists visit www.stuckism.com. The online petition is at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/tatedirector>



brera gardens

- garden design
- maintenance
- hard landscaping
- interior plants & containers
- soft landscaping
- East Finchley based

Mob. 07939 557 934

Tel. 020 8365 3615

Jennie Mann FLOWERS



- ◆ Hand tied bouquets
- ◆ Planted arrangements
- ◆ Orchids
- ◆ Vases and Containers
- ◆ Scented Candles
- ◆ Gifts
- ◆ Homewares
- ◆ Events
- ◆ Corporate
- ◆ Deliveries throughout northwest London and beyond

63a Church Lane, East Finchley, London N2 8DR

tel: 020 8365 2284

email: info@jenniemann.co.uk

www.jenniemann.com

Midhurst Butchers

Certified organic meat at reasonable prices
Free-range poultry
Home-made sausages (including Boerwors)

2 Midhurst Parade,
Fortis Green, London N10
Tel. 020 8883 5303

www.AndysWeb.net

Website Design and Development

10% off for The Archer readers

eCommerce (online shop) specialist

Professional Graphic Designer available

Website Packages with Hosting from £245!

IT Support, PC/MAC and Broadband Help

Call 07963 256 275 email andy@andysweb.net