

PRESS RELEASE

OUDS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY DRAMATIC SOCIETY



presents their **125th Anniversary Tour**

THE MASTER AND MARGARITA

by **Max Hoehn** and **Raymond Blankenhorn**

A brand new adaptation of the cult novel by Mikhail Bulgakov.

Moscow's Devil comes to the UK...

It is 1930, and the citizens of Moscow no longer believe in Heaven and Hell.

While the Devil toys with the literary elite, a young woman searches for her lover, a blacklisted writer who has disappeared after the rejection of his novel - a novel about Pontius Pilate...

The Source

Bulgakov's novel was a tale of courage and faith told like no other before or since. With no question of passing Soviet censors, it remained unpublished until 1966. It is now the most famous and loved work of this writer, enjoying a particular resurgence since the huge success of the 2009 adaptation of his earlier novel, *The White Guard*, at the National Theatre.

The Production

Incorporating live music, ballet, songs and pantomime, this ensemble has achieved the impossible in bringing the myth and magic of Bulgakov's ground-breaking novel to the stage in a truly impressive fringe show. With a towering set over thirty costumes changes, OUDS have pulled out all the stops for their 125th Anniversary tour.

“What OUDS have achieved is remarkable.” - The Oxford Times

An entirely new script written by two Russian-speaking members of the company brings writers and madmen, witches and babushka to life. Inspired by the post-1917 theatre of Vsevolod Meyerhold and followers, the direction draws on this commedia del'arte style to bring out the playfulness of the source's scenes, as well as the absurd and grotesque in their dark underside. The adaptation packs in all the novel's favourite episodes while careful arrangement and patterning of key moments produces a coherent sense of a developing tale for the uninitiated.

The Venues

Oxford – Catholic Chaplaincy – 31st July

A cavernous space whose walls are mounted with paintings of the crucifixion, the Newman Hall at Oxford's Catholic Chaplaincy is a venue that adds a frisson to the religious dimension of the play.

Oxford – Modern Art museum – 2nd August

(fundraising performance, by invitation)

Modern Art Oxford is one of the city's best-kept secrets. Its stunning dimensions provide a fantastic space for the piece to be performed amidst vast paintings by Howard Hodgson. This is the first time a dramatic piece will be held in the venue, and the exclusive audience will enjoy a cultural extravaganza of art, music, theatre and literature all in one night.

London – Battersea Arts Centre – 3rd-4th August

BAC's Recreation Room provides a highly technically equipped venue that's one step above your usual black box theatre. With décor evocative of a rundown apartment, the space will hold the audience within the story

Edinburgh – C Soco studio 2a – 6th-30th August

The found spaces at the fringe's renowned C venues have had a health and safety renovation, but still retain their dilapidated walls, so the atmosphere of Moscow will spread through the audience from the set to the ceiling. With inspirational company Belt-Up playing downstairs, Oxford's ingénues have found a perfect space with C Soco.

Four spaces – each emphasizing a different strand of the tale.

Four spaces – each ready to be transformed by Constructivist pieces of set – and theatrical set pieces.

The Company

OUDS celebrates its 125th anniversary this year of its founding in 1885. The UK Tour is a longstanding venture, bringing the society's finest actors outside the city walls. Including stars of the huge Oxford Playhouse stage and veterans of many a fringe and festival, not least Edinburgh, this year's group is one to watch. A number of cast members are in such hot demand they are performing in multiple fringe shows, with one arriving in time to don his full body suit just moments before lights up.

Featuring:

Cassie Barraclough – Margarita

Cassie studied at Oxford School of Drama last year, and in her first year at Oxford has appeared in 8 shows, including starring as Mimi in the University's first production of *Rent*. Prior to Oxford she acted at the National Theatre as well as in *Spooks* and *Life Begins*. After Edinburgh, she will be gracing the Oxford Playhouse main stage in both of their autumn student shows. This summer, Cassie is preceding her month in Edinburgh with a run as Wendla in *Spring Awakening*, at the Camden People's Theatre in London.

Ollo Clark – Master

Ollo has had three of the coveted roles in student Playhouse shows this year, including starring as Finn in *The Magic Toyshop*. In Edinburgh, he is combining performing for OUDS with appearing in the pieces of ONEOHONE, a new immersive theatre company.

The Director, **Max Hoehn**, first came to the fringe in 2007 with a production of *Danton's Death*. Since then at Oxford he has directed and acted in a huge variety of shows, including a staging of 'The Marriage of Figaro' in Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre. After Edinburgh he will be assisting on a new production of Rossini's *Guillame Tell* at the Opernhaus Zurich in Switzerland.

OUDS' present a truly diverse, fast-paced telling of a twentieth century classic.

Listings information

Venue: Battersea Arts Centre

Dates: 3rd – 4th August

Time: 6pm, 9pm (1hr10)

Ticket prices: £8 / £7

Venue: C Soco 2a, Edinburgh Fringe

Dates: 6th – 30th August

Time: 10.30pm (1hr10)

Ticket prices: £8.50-£10.50 / £7.50 - £9.50



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