

## Contemporary morality play offers critique of American society

German theatre group re-examines a Tennessee Williams play at the Teatre Nacional

From 28 June to 1 July, the play "Forever Young" will be on at the Sala Gran of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya. Forever Young is an adaptation of Tennessee Williams' "Sweet Bird of Youth", by the German director Frank Castorf. It is the first time that Castorf's theatre group, *Berlin Volksbühne*, is to perform in Barcelona.

"Forever Young", performed at the Festival of Vienna in 2003, deals with the themes of a loss of youth and the erosion of democracy. Williams' play, its inspiration, was performed in 1959, is a critique of a narcissistic American society. It portrays the life of the character Tom Finlay, who succeeds in conducting his criminal dealings and climbing to a top position in the state with his Christian rhetoric and his well-calculated involvement in a private fas-



Frank Castorf is director of the German theatre company Berlin Volksbühne

cist army. Castorf's version reexamines Williams' critique, in the age of Terminator governors and "compassionate conservatism".

Frank Castorf is one of the most distinguished figures in contemporary German theatre. Since 1992 he has been artistic director of the Berlin Volksbühne, a leader in the avant garde. He is known for being fearless when it comes to cutting out sections, adding new lines and using pop music as a way of creating contrast. Most distinguished figures in contemporary German theatre. His experience in staging adaptations includes the works by Schiller (*The Robbers*), Shakespeare (*King Lear*), Sartre (*Les Mains Sales*), Dostoyevski (*The Insulted and the Injured*), and Müller (*The Battle*).

"Forever Young" will only be performed four times at the TNC.

## Gas company lends Barcelona cathedral a helping hand

Gas Natural has just donated 200,000 euros to the restoration of the façade of Barcelona's Gothic cathedral. From 1 July to 30 September, there will be a large sign branding the gas company's logo. The funding came after a month-long joint campaign by the *Institut del Paisatge Urbà* and the church in search of greater financing to complete the urgent reconstruction. The budget was placed at one million euros.



## Entrance to dialogues free for Forum visitors

The "read my lips" message could not have been any clearer. Organisers of Barcelona's Forum did not expect to lower the ticket prices for dialogues which many said were too expensive.

But lower than expected attendance figures have brought the law of supply and demand into play. As of yesterday, those visiting the Barcelona Forum will be able to attend dialogues free of charge.

During the last few weeks, the organisers of the Forum have ad-

mitted that the 23 dialogues that have been held until now have not had attracted as many visitors as they would have liked, in spite of assuring that the attendance figures were higher than originally forecast.

This week Forum organisers announced that attendance was 9% lower than predicted.

Forum spokesman Frederic Porta has announced that free entrance to the dialogues will be subject to seat availability, and that visitors must register for dialogues be-

fore entering the main site.

Special stands will be set up around the entrance areas where visitors can sign up for dialogues that will be held that day.

Originally, dialogue prices ranged from 30 to 115 euros. A ticket to the main Forum site for adults costs 21 euros. The mayor of Barcelona and the president of the Forum, Joan Clos, has already announced that other measures are being studied to increase attendance of dialogues.

"This had been taken into consideration, that visitors to the Forum and who are interested in attending dialogues could do it without any hinderance", Porta said.

Different representatives of social organisations and even political representatives such as Green Party (ICV) leader Imma Mayol have questioned justification of the high prices for the dialogues.

49 different dialogues are scheduled for the 141 total days of the Forum.

## Stars and fans bid farewell to Ray Charles at funeral in LA

Actor Clint Eastwood, ex-US president Bill Clinton and music stars Stevie Wonder and Willie Nelson were among those who paid their respects to the R&B legend, who died last week. Prior to the funeral, fans filed in slowly to visit the body of R&B legend, Ray Charles, at a public display in Los Angeles. Charles lay in an open casket beside a grand piano at the LA Convention Center.

## Oldest human fossils on show in Tarragona

The archaeological site La Gran Dolina, in the region of Burgos, is of crucial importance in terms of our understanding of the evolution of mankind, and now, for the first time, Catalans will have a chance to see at first-hand some of the wonders that have been unearthed at that spot on the Sierra de Atapuerca.

The exhibition *Atapuerca i l'evolució humana* (Atapuerca and human evolution) which has just opened in Tarragona contains the oldest human fossils discovered in Europe, and includes a reconstruction of the famous 800,000-year-old skull of a boy from the species *Homo antecessor*, considered to be the very first European. The exhibition is on at Tinglado 1, Moll de Costa in Tarragona.



The exhibition of the oldest human fossil remains in Europe, currently on show at Tarragona\Abraham Sebastià

## Estopa gives packed Palau a taste of rumba-rock

Estopa rocked the stage at Barcelona's Palau Sant Jordi last night. With a turnout of around 18,000, it was the third time that the musical duo from Cornellà (David and José Muñoz) would fill the Palau. In fact, to their credit, it is the first full-house event that the concert hall has seen during Fòrum-Ciutat. Neither Sting nor Lenny Kravitz were able to fill more than 11,000 seats. Concerts have all sold out on the Estopa tour since it began in May.