

Fri, 2 Mar 2012

More Nights at the Opera

Brian,

Further to mine below, attached is a piece I wrote way back when. Am not sure if it was ever published, as at the time the printed version of the Observer was about to disappear

I continue to enjoy the Opera at the Conservatoire, and many things have indeed improved in the past 5 years: the new lady in the Kassa is friendly, and the audience is bigger, though rarely to capacity. But not all vestiges of the Soviet era have been cast off; in particular, immediately after the last curtain call, another employee stands in the foyer with a menacing set of keys, as if all too eager to throw the punters out so she can get home. The same lady, if approached before the performance for a programme, seems to take malicious delight if she can say 'Nie'.

Now I have no wish to dominate your columns, and appreciate that the open season for the European Cup will be closed season for Opera. But it would be interesting for one of your reporters to ask the following questions of museums, art galleries and theatres in general:-

- 1) What preparations have you made in anticipation of the influx of foreigners during the European Cup?
- 2) What extra effort would be needed to tap this potential source of tourists to Ukraine, both during the event and in the longer term?

I suspect the usual answers will be 'very few' and 'very little', respectively.

Mike