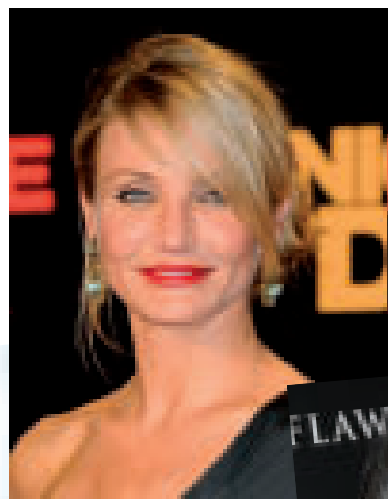


Times2 fashion

Perfector gadgets for your face



Rather like the sandwich toaster, home beauty devices have often been seen as gimmicky innovations: fun to use at first but all too quickly relegated to the back of the cupboard. The past year, however, has seen a boom in at-home beauty technology led by electronic gadgets such as the Tua Tre'nd (favoured by Kate Moss), Slendertone's Female Face, and the Clarisonic cleanser. This last is the facial equivalent of the electric toothbrush, endorsed by a rash of celebrities and the fastest-growing brand on QVC America, selling more than two million models. This leap in technology has allowed women to enjoy the benefits of professional beauty machines at home for little more than the cost of the monthly salon facial. Sales for this market at Selfridges rose 27 per cent from 2009 to 2010 and double-digit growth was reported at Harrods. Jane Henderson, the president of Mintel's beauty division, valued the UK market at £110 million in 2009 and estimates that it will be worth around £125 million by 2012. Unsurprisingly, the recession has played its part. David Walker Smith, beauty director at Selfridges, has noticed that men and women have increasingly sought more cost-effective



The Squoom anti-ageing device costs £549; gadget fans Cameron Diaz, Demi Moore and Courtney Cox; and the Clarisonic cleanser, £155



solutions. While these so-called "recessionista" gadgets vary in price — from £150 to £300 — they help families whose budgets are being squeezed. The backlash against Botox and invasive surgery to combat anti-ageing have also contributed to their popularity. Celebrities who have opted for the convenience of the home "lift and tuck" or "deep cleanse" include Demi Moore, Cameron Diaz and Courtney Cox. Key to the success of these gadgets is that they work with a user's skincare regimen. It means customers don't need to ditch a favourite face cream, working instead to enhance the results. In the case of the Clarisonic, it has been clinically proved to remove six times more make-up than manual cleaning and subsequently applied skincare was 60 per cent more effective. I was sceptical at first. Would I find the time to incorporate it into my increasingly low-maintenance skin routine. It was, however, surprisingly easy to work out and a definite plus was

Do these electronic devices mark the end of salon facials?

that it could also be used in the shower. After a week I had to admit that my skin certainly looked brighter, felt cleaner and was very soft to the touch. Face creams and masks seemed to absorb better and my new radiance was often commented on. But will the success of at-home beauty gadgetry spell the end of the salon facial? Mark Philips, a spokesman at Habia, the government-approved body that sets standards for the hair and beauty industry, says: "In terms of customers through the door, beauty salons have seen a decrease over the past two years. While people are still going for beauty treatments, the frequency has declined. People who may have visited monthly are now going every eight weeks: people who went eight times a year are going five or six times. With increased prices and pay freezes in 2011, it's likely that many customers will struggle to justify a visit to the beauty salon." Others aren't so sure. Like many industry insiders, the cosmetic doctor

Patrick Bower doesn't believe that the success of the products will inhibit the need to visit a spa. "The success of home technology only increases our awareness and desire for better skin. A lot of salon therapists might incorporate these gadgets into their treatments and a consumer is more likely to trust in their endorsement. You're taking skincare to another level and growing the industry as a whole." The market looks set to grow with the launch this month at Harrods of the eagerly anticipated Squoom, an anti-ageing multi-tasker that cleanses, massages, lifts and brightens — although it is expensive at £549. While our Times2 guinea pig was impressed by skin that looked brighter, even feeling confident enough to go "foundation-free" after just three weeks, she couldn't reconcile herself to the 12-minute daily faff. Sometimes, there's just no getting away from the pampering hands of an experienced facialist. Carolyn Asome

The jury Spring nail colours

OPI Nail Lacquer in Don't Mess With OPI £10.50, lenawhite.co.uk **They say** Vivid and shine-intense shades. **We say** The polish went on smoothly and gave a deep matt colour after the second coat. It was chip-free after two days, at which point I removed it — green is just a bit too "Grobags" for my taste, but I'd certainly buy this polish again in a different colour. **6/10**



China Glaze Nail Lacquer in Life Preserver £6.49, sallyexpress.com **They say** Long-wearing, chip-resistant formula will leave your nails perfectly polished and with an on-trend look for less. **We say** The first coat was a bit streaky but after two the unusual rust colour looked great. Makes a great subtle orange alternative to coral and was chip-free for a week. **9/10**



Chanel Le Vernis in Black Pearl £17, chanel.co.uk **They say** State-of-the-art formula strengthens and moisturises nails as it delivers long-lasting, high-shine, chip-resistant colour. **We say** The colour lived up to its name of pearly black — it stayed buffed and shiny for a whole weekend and was definitely more muted elegance than goth. If you're going to go for an unusual nail colour, this one won't scare the horses. **8/10**



Essie in Coat Azure £9.95, nailsbymail.co.uk **They say** Very clean and bright pastel colour sets a new tone for the season: optimistic and fun. **We say** In theory, blue should be the perfect colour for me; I wear it all the time. But as I have pale hands, blue polish just makes me look hypothermic. It's a nice, thick consistency and lasted for three days, but I still believe that you can't beat plain old red. **5/10**



Precision Nail Lacquer in Enlightenment £5.99, 07971032570 **They say** Creamy, easy-to-wear pastel shades that will put you into a Zen state. **We say** This sunny yellow was "60-a-day smoker" after one coat, but became edgy, spring-time fashionista after two — almost. With my pale, pinky skin, it clashed and looked a bit like Tippex, but a definite tick for those with olive, brown or black skin. **5/10**



Estée Lauder Pure Color in Violet Diva £14, 0870 034 2566 **They say** Rich and glossy with an intense, mirror-like high shine — and it's fast-drying. **We say** The deep lilac hue was fresh and fun, but the consistency was gloopy and ended up being streaky on application. After a few days of compliments on my "novel" choice of colour, the paint started to chip around both the base and top of my nail. **5/10**



The South Park crew find God

Trey Parker and Matt Stone have stormed Broadway with a musical about Mormons. It's more than just cheap gibes, they assure **Tim Teeman**

The Book of Mormon, if it achieves nothing else, can claim to have reduced America's sharpest political satirist to an embarrassing, babbling mess. Jon Stewart could barely muster a coherent question to the Broadway musical's creators, Matt Stone and Trey Parker, the duo behind the animated TV comedy South Park and that gleefully rude deconstruction of global politics, Team America: World Police, when they appeared on Stewart's Daily Show last Thursday. Stewart, better known for his barbs at the political establishment, gushed fan worship. "I can't tell you how impressed I was," he said. "You have somehow managed to satirise religion yet also celebrate it." The show (tagline: "God's Favourite

Musical") is a gaudy cavalcade of song and dance with as much profanity and outrage as you would expect from the duo, including a song called F*** You God — with a refrain "Don't f*** that baby, f*** that frog" — sung by a group of Ugandans who have misunderstood the teachings of a pair of hopelessly out-of-their-depth Mormon missionaries sent to convert them to Mormonism. The musical's title is the title of the sacred text of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Stone and Parker have described their show as "an atheist love letter to religion" but, five years in the making with 18 original songs, it is also, says the



Andrew Rannells, also left, and Josh Gad meet the natives of darkest Uganda in The Book of Mormon

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South Park couldn't have survived without a moral framework

lifelong musicals fan Parker, a "musical in the most traditional sense of the word. There are no special effects, we don't make any grand claims to reinventing the Broadway show and," he adds earnestly, "it's certainly not about hating Mormons." If the early audiences' reaction is echoed by the critics, The Book of Mormon — which Parker, 41, and Stone, 39, wrote with Robert Lopez, the co-writer/composer of Avenue Q — may soon supplant the crisis-beset Spider-Man: Turn off the Dark as the most talked-about show on Broadway, for the best possible reasons. Stone reveals that they hope to bring it to London and to begin a touring production in America. The show has so far met with nightly standing ovations and surprised audiences, including far-from-offended Mormons. It is mocking, outrageous and satirical, but also humane, thoroughly researched and moral, focusing on how the faith and practice of devout believers in a Third World country can buckle in the face of extreme misery and hardship. Its message is: don't be prideful, don't be vain, be a good friend and you might emerge an unexpected hero. Parker acknowledges that those who perceive South Park as a happily gratuitous rude joke-fest may approach the musical expecting the same, "but we see both as having a moral framework. South Park couldn't have survived without that. With this musical, we didn't want to produce a theatre show that made cheap jokes against Mormons. We wanted people to leave feeling warm and happy." "Listen, a good fart joke will make me laugh till I'm 80," Stone says. "We're not elitist about our jokes. But you need to say more than 'f***' and 'shit' to keep an audience interested for two hours." The two lead characters in The Book of Mormon, just like South Park's Kyle, Stan, Cartman and Kenny, may learn a lesson but it's a perverse odyssey. As with many Mormon missionaries, the teenagers from Salt Lake City go on their first mission at 18 as a pair: an all-American boy who dreamt his trip would be to Orlando, Florida, not Africa, and a schlubby guy who idolises him; there is more than a hint of homoeroticism thrumming throughout. The teenagers begin full of hope, but once in Uganda are shocked by a country brutalised by war, Aids and corruption. One of the most rousing scenes evokes an all-singing, all-dancing Mormon Hell, featuring figures from history such as Hitler and the mass murderer Jeffrey Dahmer. Just as in South Park (where he is voiced by Stone), Jesus makes an appearance, as do the Mormon Church's founder Joseph Smith, his successor Brigham Young and the angel Moroni. ▶

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“I was expecting to be offended,” Anne Christensen, a New York member of the Latter Day Saints, told a Utah newspaper, “but was pleasantly surprised by how incredibly sweet it was.” Her mother Janet added: “They treated us with affection. And they did their homework.” Parker, who is from Colorado, says: “I grew up around Mormons and I have never met a Mormon I don’t like. It’s no sillier than any other religion, it’s just newer and more American, which means it’s easier to research. I wanted to be accurate about the setting and we’re into storytelling and fables and the Mormon story is rich in both.”

Stone says that every time he and Parker — who met at college in Colorado — make fun of any group in *South Park*, “that group loves it”. Theirs is an equal-opportunities offence-giving credo. “We like to keep our own prejudices and political beliefs unfixed and elusive,” Stone says. “The people most upset after *Team America* were liberals who thought we had betrayed them by not making a totally anti-Bush film. But once you start thinking you’re the rational one, the one’s who’s right, and everyone around you is irrational or wrong, that makes you the stupid one. We say, “The truth is

PREVIOUS PAGE: JOAN MARCUS, BELOW: MICHAEL YARISH



Matt Stone and Trey Parker, creators of *South Park*'s junior miscreants, including Kyle Broflovski, below

“A serious drama would end up being terrible. We live to offend

everyone’s stupid, hooray.”

Stone (“I’m a rock’n’roll guy”) was converted to musicals by Parker, who has been a fan since he was little, when his parents took him to watch “every single classic” of the genre at their community theatre. At school he played Danny in *Grease*. The new musical was inevitable given that he’s been “trying to force musicals into everything we do”, from the low-budget movie *Cannibal! The Musical* (1993) to *Orgazmo* (1997), about a Mormon-turned-porn-star. Fourteen seasons of *South Park* all feature musical numbers. After their *South Park* film *Bigger, Longer & Uncut* was released, for which Parker shared an Academy Award nomination with Marc Shaiman for the song *Blame Canada*, Stephen Sondheim sent Parker a fan letter, which — he said later — “was worth 20 Academy Awards to me”.

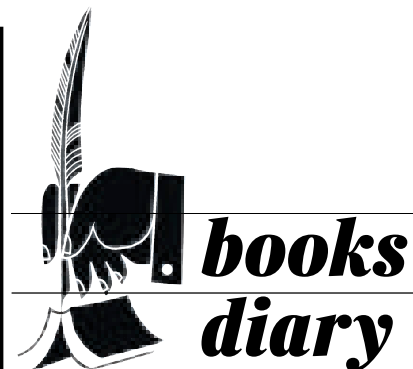
For *The Book of Mormon*, Parker reveals he, Stone and Lopez wrote the songs first, “and that dictated the shape of the show. I’m a huge lover of Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals and I wanted to keep that structure and feel.” Stone says the reception afforded to *Spider-Man* didn’t put them off. “We’re more nervous to see if our own show works. A couple of weeks ago I was a wreck reaching for the Scotch, now I’m reaching for the Scotch hopeful we got it right. What’s surprising is watching audiences titter at points where I really laugh, and them really laughing at parts I only tittered at.”

Now their musical is up and running, Stone and Parker, who have a \$75 million contract with the cable channel Comedy Central, must deliver seven new episodes of *South Park*. The show began in 1997 and will run “a few more years”, Stone says. “It has a life span, like everything on TV. We like doing it but not for ever.”

Another film is slowly germinating, “though first we’re going to take a rest,” Parker says. Stone is married with a one-year-old son, while Parker is in a relationship with a woman who has a 10-year-old son. But don’t imagine pipes and slippers. When I suggest they make a serious drama, Stone laughs. “That would end up being terrible and unintentionally funny.” Parker adds: “We live to offend. We’re just profane people. We’re trying to come up with new swear words all the time.”

“Ever since we met, it’s been about trying to make the other one laugh,” Stone says. “If we manage to do that, we consider it a job well done.”

The Book of Mormon is at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre, West 49th Street, New York (bookofmormonbroadway.com)



Non-fiction: the first victim of war

When Toby Harnden’s (right) book *Dead Men Risen: The Welsh Guards and the Real Story of Britain’s War in Afghanistan*



appears this week, we should expect it to be leather-bound and hand-stitched, with colour illustrations throughout. Only such craftsmanship could justify the Ministry of Defence’s expenditure of £150,000 on pulping the first edition of 24,000 copies, which was alleged to have contained sensitive material. That works out at £6.25 a copy.

Bestseller guide to beating recession

Spring is in the air, and publishers are getting out their cheque books, as if there were no recession and booksellers were thriving. Rivalling Fourth Estate, which has paid a high six figures to Jeffrey Eugenides, is Simon & Schuster, which is advancing some £500,000 to the first-time author Karen Thompson Walker for a novel called *The Age of Miracles*, set in a world that has started to turn more slowly. Hodder & Stoughton has paid a “significant” six-figure sum to secure two novels by the Irish author Ciara Geraghty, and Chatto & Windus is very excited about newcomer Grace McCleen, whose novel *The Land of Decoration* is about a young girl growing up in a fundamentalist household in the North of England (and yes, has been likened to *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*).

Bible part III, the untold story

After a semi-fabricated memoir, a public scolding from Oprah and starting a “fiction factory”, James



Frey (above) enjoys controversy. Next month the American author plans to pull the pin on another grenade by self-publishing his latest book, *The Final Testament of the Holy Bible*, on Good Friday. It’s a theoretical third volume of the Bible in which the Messiah is a pot-smoking alcoholic from the Bronx who snogs men and impregnates a prostitute. Boom. Can he prompt more than the usual indifference from liberals and outrage from the religious right?

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