

Oxford's DAILY INFO
 Issue No. 7889
 Tue 4th - Wed 5th March 2008 (8th week)
 Next issue: Thu 6th March
 Deadline: 10am, Wed 5th March

WHAT'S ON / COMING SOON

Oxford Music Network
 Wed 3 March, Sheldonham Theatre 8pm
MUSIC AT OXFORD
 Paul Lewis & Leopold String Trio
 Tickets £10-137
 www.musicatoxford.com

Thu 4 March, Sheldonham Theatre 7pm
OXFORD FILM SOCIETY
 Don Giovanni
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 www.oxfordphil.com

Booking: 0870 750 0659/01865 305 305
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The Sunday Times OXFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL
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31 March - 6 April 2008
 with over 250 authors
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 • Q&A with Philip Pullman

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CINEMA to Thu 6th March

Vue Cinema (08712 240 240)

SEMI-PRO (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.30, 6.45, 9.00pm
 UNRATABLE (18) Mon-Thur 1.45, 4.15, 6.35pm
 THE BANK JOB (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 NATIONAL TREASURE 2 (PG) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 THERE WILL BE BLOOD (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 JUNO (12A) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 RAMBO (18) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 JUMPER (12A) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 BE KING REWIND (12A) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 THE ACCIDENTAL HUSBAND (12A) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 Odeon Magdalen St (0871 2244 007)
 NATIONAL TREASURE 2: BOOK OF SECRETS (PG) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 SEMI-PRO (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 TONAL TALES (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 Odeon George St (0871 2244 007)
 THE BANK JOB (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 THERE WILL BE BLOOD (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 JUNO (12A) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 THE ACCIDENTAL HUSBAND (12A) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 DEFINITELY MAYBE (12A) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 BE KING REWIND (12A) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 SEMI-PRO (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 TONAL TALES (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 Odeon Playhouse (303505)
 DANCE ON SCREEN (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 Ultimate Picture Palace (245288)
 LUST CAUTION (18) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN (15) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 DON'T TOUCH THE AXE (PG) Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm

HEARE to Sat 8th March

Pegasus Theatre (72851)
 ANIT MISHKIN'S LAST VISIT Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 Oxford Playhouse (303505)
 THE CLEAN HOUSE Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 PLAY BITES: WHAT'S YOUR POSITION? Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 OFS STUDIO (297170)
 THE 4th Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 Oxford & Cherrwell Village College - City Centre Campus (550550)
 SPRING DANCE PLATFORM Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 New Theatre, Oxford (0870 6063500)
 ALL THAT JAZZ Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 SWAN LAKE Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 Burton Taylor Studio (305305)
 TRUE WEST Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 Unicorn Theatre
 NOEL COWARD'S PRESENT LAUGHTER Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 O'Reilly Theatre, Keble College
 THE YOUNG MAN Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm
 Science Oxford (728955)
 NY-UK TRANSLANTSLIC SLAM Mon-Thur 1.15, 4.15, 6.35pm

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CINEMA REVIEW

There Will Be Blood [15]
 Showing at the Vue Cinema and Phoenix Picture House to at least March 6th See listings, left.

In the words of Public Enemy, "Don't believe the hype." It's dark and unsettling, but in the same way that the exaggerated 'torque porn' films of late might be. The setting of the film in certain engaging, and as the characters are laid out you're expecting a complex and calculated drama. Unfortunately the plot descends quickly into pointless violence and farcical overacting.

As menacing as Daniel Day-Lewis's character might be, there is no explanation of his descent into madness. In fact, descent is not even the right word - there is very little evolution of plot or character, simply embellishment beyond reason. Day-Lewis's performance may be entertaining to watch, and it is the only one which, but it has none of the subtlety and charisma of Forest Whitaker's psychotic Idi Amin in *The Last King of Scotland*.

The images and music of *'There Will Be Blood'* are effective in painting the bleakness and desperation of the Texas frontier, but no more so than the recent *Assassination of Jesse James* or even *'No Country for Old Men'*. Unfortunately there seems to be little substance beyond this atmospheric stage. It ends up feeling like a grand allegory of nothing. Every plotline that could provide interest is crudely tied off with violence, clumsy dialogue or simply ignored. And the final act is simply baffling... killing any atmosphere that remained and leaving you wondering if you could have got a drink in 30 minutes earlier.

Antibody

The Bucket List [12A]
 Showing at the Odeon George Street to at least Thu 6th March. See Cinema listings, left.

A downbeat title and a morbid subject. But *The Bucket List* is a sweet, life-affirming movie that coasts on the charisma of its stars.

Millionaire businessman Jack Nicholson builds hospitals - made to measure, two patients per year. The last thing he expects to do is have to share one with a much younger man, leaving it to Freeman and the enjoyable Nicholson to carry the film as a two-handed masted ship.

Diagnosed with terminal illness, the odd couple bond (of course) and decide to blow Nicholson's millions on their bucket list - ten things to do before they kick the bucket.

Skydiving septuagenarians is funnier than it sounds. And 'kiss the most beautiful girl in the world' is achieved with a wonderful pay-off, true to the spirit of the film.

The Bucket List is hard to characterize - not bittersweet; but certainly sweet it's not at all bitter. Death, faith, love, regret, all are dealt with lightly but seriously.

And though the script could be sharper and wittier (Nicholson, after all, was born to speak superlative), it plays up a much more mature form, leaving it to Freeman and the enjoyable Nicholson to carry the film as a two-handed masted ship.

Freeman's frosty relationship with his wife, Nicholson's estrangement from his daughter - it all points to a sappy finale. Wisely, though, director Rob Reiner (*When Harry Met Sally*) subverts each situation - winging emotion, but not in the ways you'd expect.

Nicely done too is the relationship between Nicholson and his long-suffering assistant - who makes the bucket list happen.

Slow and stately, *The Bucket List* won't top everyone's chart but as a warm and thoughtful antidote to fast and furious films, it could just be what the doctor ordered.

Glenn Watson

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THEATRE REVIEW

Stomp
 Stomp was showing at the New Theatre, Oxford, in February as part of Danco's Oxford 2008 Festival
 The festival continues to March 9th at various venues. See Theatre and Cinema listings, left.

Short shots of rhythmic performance are delivered as this warm-hearted troupe share their personalities and the audience get to know their characters through having no initial means everyone stays with the beat as the tempo of the show rises and falls like a roaring rollercoaster. The fast and furious combat routine with sticks is breathtaking in its accuracy. Different lengths of hollow tubing are tapped on the ground creating an eerie style of sound like a journey through a jungle at night. Drummers hang by ropes from a frame that holds a giant gamelan of drums and take the theatre to a cathartic crescendo. Garish kitchen sinks are worn as stomp sticks and urinating into buckets. A girl beating ferociously on two big drums offering a rhythm to a chap jumping in a wooden box across the stage illustrates the warm feeling of collaboration that runs through this company. The cast member pouring grit in front of the feet of the dancers before they cut up the stage drum, this coming out of itself as a stage. The group is bonded by the need to share the joy of what it brings. Luckily spectators are not excluded from the fun that is unfolding on stage!

With a single clap the charismatic leader of the pack makes the though sound of the gang even this reviewer's skills, it's a bonding experience. All human life is contained in this performance. A skinny comic character works hard to be part of the group but always there is no chair for him. The gang who crowd him and rustle their newspapers in his face shatters his peace; this is the cue for an urban melody based on the performers clearing their throats in a comfortable canoe as you see work clothes, the ensemble share themselves freely with us in the traditions of physical theatre. As the trials of life are shared there is no façade that separates audience and performer as a dialogue that is full of gestures and no words is established. It is stunning the amount of communication that is achieved by rhythm alone.

Watching the show as it moves from form to form I feel I am not alone in struggling to figure out exactly how to describe this phenomenon to folk at work next day. Much of Stomp's work evolves from generic everyday objects. The evening starts with the humdrum of dragging a sweeping brush over the stage. Other routines involve cigarette lighters and water cooler bottles; so much of it is transferable to our everyday life. Before I know it I'm uncontrollably tapping out one of their rhythms on a biro. This is deeply satisfying. The brochure lists performers past and present, giving the reassuring feeling that they never truly leave the company. So we are all part of the journey of this runaway British success story that shows no signs of slowing down. Whilst the list of performers for each show can change, the website reads 'Obviously everyone has to drum'. While that rules me out, dustbin lids will never be the same again.

Lita Doolan