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the All Formats
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CINEMA
Until Thu 11th Nov

Ozone Multiplex (0780 444 3030)

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BRIDE AND PREJUDICE (12A) Daily: 12.15, 3.00, 5.45, 8.25 Jane Austen gets the Broadway treatment

BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON (15) Fri-Sun: 10.10, 12.30, 3.30, 6.30, 8.50 picks up 4 weeks after the last film left off...

FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) Fri-Sun: 10.35, 1.15, 3.35, 6.15, 8.35 Anthony Duggin as Peter Pan author J.M. Barrie

FIVE CHILDREN AND IT (U) Daily: 11.00, 1.00 E. Nesbit classic with Eddie Ezzard as T

LAYER CAKE (15) Daily: 9.00 Tom Cruise as a lawyer

MAN ON FIRE (18) Daily: 8.20 Bruce Willis as a former cop

SAW (18) Daily: 9.00 gratuitous gorefest à la 'Saw' - but the serial killer makes his victims kill each other

SHARK TALE (U) (Fri & Mon-Thur: 12.00, 2.00, 4.00, 6.00 Sat & Sun: 10.10, 11.00, 12.00, 2.00, 4.00, 6.00, 8.00 animated adventures of a little shark, starring Robert de Niro and Will Smith

THE GRUDGE (15) Daily: 12.00, 2.10, 4.30, 6.45, 9.00 a cross between The Ring and 28 Days Later

THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2 - THE ROYAL ENGAGEMENT (U) Fri-Sun: 10.10, 12.30, 3.30, 6.30 Mon-Thur: 12.30, 3.30, 6.30 modern fairytale with Anne Hathaway and Julie Andrews

WHITE CHICKS (12A) Daily: 11.50, 2.10, 4.30, 6.50 cross-dressing comedy

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OXFORD HISTORY

TOWN & GOWN

There are historic battlefields on which less blood has been spilt than in the streets of Oxford.

The Vice-Chancellor The Lord Mayor

On St John's Day, 1555, a riot broke out which lasted three days. 64 students were killed, about the same number of townspeople.

The St Scholastica's Day Riot began with a brawl at the Swindlestock Tavern at Carfax (where the Abbey National Bank now stands). The mechanics of public brewing appear to have changed little since 1355 - fighting started when some scholars threw wine in the landlord's face, and followed it up with a quart pot. The townsman rang the bell of Carfax tower, and the students that of St Mary's, to summon their respective forces. Thousands of wild country folk rushed into the city crying "Havoc! Havoc! Smyf fast, give gode knocks!". 63 students were killed, and the rest fled. But though the townspeople won the day, they lost the war, for the University invoked the assistance of the king. For 500 years (until 1825) the Mayor and 63 citizens were obliged to do penance on the 10th February, the anniversary of the riot: each had to process to St Mary's, bow before the Vice-Chancellor, and pay a fine of a penny.

ST SCHOLASTICA'S DAY RIOT

The St Scholastica's Day Riot began with a brawl at the Swindlestock Tavern at Carfax (where the Abbey National Bank now stands). The mechanics of public brewing appear to have changed little since 1355 - fighting started when some scholars threw wine in the landlord's face, and followed it up with a quart pot. The townsman rang the bell of Carfax tower, and the students that of St Mary's, to summon their respective forces. Thousands of wild country folk rushed into the city crying "Havoc! Havoc! Smyf fast, give gode knocks!". 63 students were killed, and the rest fled. But though the townspeople won the day, they lost the war, for the University invoked the assistance of the king. For 500 years (until 1825) the Mayor and 63 citizens were obliged to do penance on the 10th February, the anniversary of the riot: each had to process to St Mary's, bow before the Vice-Chancellor, and pay a fine of a penny.

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MEETINGS / LECTURES

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THE SPIN JAZZ CLUB / KELVIN CHRISTIANE - 2 sessions in one month - can it be done? / Open 8.15. Band on the 9-11 E8 E4 & The Club/The Wheelchair. Wheelchair Alley, 129 High Street, Tel: 243276; Web: <http://www.spinjazz.com>

SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUIT / Performers of all kinds welcomed! Free / 5pm / The Half Moon, 17 St Clements, Oxford

OCM & VACUOUS POP PRESENTS / Xahdrez - live @ Modern Art Oxford Contemporary Music / 5.45pm / £3 (£2 concessions) / Web: <http://www.ocmvents.org> & <http://www.vacuoussop.com> / Modern Art Oxford, 30 Pembroke Street, Opening times: Tues - Sat 10.5pm, Sun 12.5pm, closed Mon. Tel: 722733; Fax: 722573; Web: <http://www.modernartoxford.org.uk>

XAHDRZ / Nick Wilson creates a mixture of mellow electronics and laptop glitch with flourishes of trumpet and other live instrumentation / 5.45 E32 / Modern Art Oxford, 30 Pembroke Street, Opening times: Tues - Sat 10.5pm, Sun 12.5pm, closed Mon. Tel: 722733; Fax: 722573; Web: <http://www.modernartoxford.org.uk>

LIVE & FREE @ THE X / Young Band Night - "Dead Horse Wild" / 8pm FREE / Easter Hall Pub, 1 Oxford Rd (corner of Cowley & Marsh Rds.); Tel: 01865 776431; Web: <http://www.oxeterhall.com>

CACAHUTES JAZZ JAM / Kenny Hung and Charli English host East Oxford's best jazz jam. / Chester FREE / Chester Hall Pub, 1 Grand Rd (corner of Cowley & Marsh Rds.); Tel: 01865 776431; Web: <http://www.oxeterhall.com>

MISHMASH / Anyone can bring their own tunes. CD/DVDs, to take multimedia night / Run by those that bring music / Every Friday plus events / Email: mishmash@oxeterhall.com or info@oxeterhall.com / East Oxford Community Centre, Pinnock Street, Tel: 722188

OXFORD FOLK CLUB / Skeleton Drum - Early Music feature / 8.30 pm. Admission £2.50 / Email: pamcooper@hotmail.com / Web: <http://www.oxfordfolkclub.com> / Port Mahon, St. Clements

LIVE & FREE @ THE X / Lama Bita plus support / 8pm FREE / Chester Hall Pub, 1 Grand Rd (corner of Cowley & Marsh Rds.); Tel: 01865 776431; Web: <http://www.oxeterhall.com>

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92, MORE www.dailyinfo.co.uk

THEATRE REVIEW

DEALER'S CHOICE by Patrick Marber
Old Fire Station Theatre, Oxford,
9th-13th November 2004

Patrick Marber's Dealer's Choice offers a hilarious glimpse into the moving happenings that take place in a small London restaurant. In an environment where gambling is the focal point of six men's lives and hopes, Marber explores human relationships, dependencies and duties, as the poker table becomes the playing field for many a shameful emotion, a tension, and an accusation.

Omrod's production is well-polished, well-acted and well-paced. Marber's sharp dialogue is staged with panache and the play is appropriately spunky and energetic. Credit for this is due, in great part, to the exceptional performance of Sam Thomas. His portrayal of Mugsy is captivating; he endows the character with a genuine sense of vacancy and displays impeccable comic timing, which leaves the audience hooting with laughter. Above all, Thomas seems to really relish the part, encouraging the audience to take equal pleasure in his performance. As the Will Fish exudes a striking aura of menace and impressively conveys a sense of internal emotion beneath his composed exterior, Sam Sampson's use of understatement is commendable in the role of Sweeney and Will Pooley is convincingly disgruntled and awkward as the teenage Carl. Special mention must also go to the set, which is an ambitious recreation of a naturalist environment and contributes to the authenticity Omrod admires so much about the play. A sensitive use of space and awareness of balance is notable on the part of the director.

Dealer's Choice carries the audience from moments of serious tension to witty relief, as the tragic and the comic combine. This poignant mixture is exemplified in Mugsy's ambition to convert a public toilet into a restaurant all of his own, an aspiration which makes him the object of much ridicule and yet to which he is tragically attached. In a way, this character's crippling stupidity makes him the most tragic figure of the play, unable even to register the pitiful nature of his dead-end existence and his addiction to gambling, or more specifically, his addiction to losing. That said, is this blissful lack of awareness perhaps to be envied?

In the opening half of the play, comedy dominates, swallowing all moments of tragedy that should happen to surfaces, without undermining their impact. A particularly remarkable example of this is the climax of two simultaneous arguments, which is interrupted and dissolved by Mugsy's farcical fumbling with a mop; he breaks the tension beautifully, transforming a peak of emotion into a peak of humor. However, as the play progresses, the comic overtones gradually give way to the rise of the tragic; at the final showdown around the poker table, even Mugsy's playful idiosyncrasies fail to detract from the haunting sense of inevitable disillusionment. It is excruciating to watch, as player after player is shattered by failure and storms out, one after another, in an eruption of tension and fury. The real tragedy lies in the perpetuation of the situation; Marber reminds of this in his closing line: "Same time next week?"

Indeed, it seems a shame that the play will not be gracing the stage of the Old Fire Station next week as well as something of a pity with a gloomy undercurrent. Dealer's Choice offers a side-splitting and thought-provoking evening's entertainment. Definitely worth a flutter.

By Holly Dickens

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