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# Oxford's WEEKLY INFORMATION

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Next issue: Saturday 18th January  
Deadline: 10am, Friday 17th January

**Fri 17th JANUARY 2003**

## COMING

**MODERN ART OXFORD.** Informal evening of Joseph Beuys' films. Friday 17 January from 7pm. Galleries open until 10pm. Free. All welcome.

## Unite for Peace

International Candlelit Vigil Against War on Iraq  
**Saturday January 18th, 6-7pm, Carfax Tower, Cornmarket**  
Candlelit vigils worldwide will show international opposition to war & support the Washington & San Francisco 'Stop the War' marches, also on the 18th. Come to Carfax with a candle!

## CINEMA REVIEW

# Gangs of New York

It is 1846. In violent combat, Bill 'the Butcher' Cutter (Daniel Day-Lewis) and his gangs of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant 'Natives' defeat the Irish Catholic immigrant gangs at Five Points, New York, and kill their leader, 'Priest' Vallon (Liam Neeson). Sixteen years later, Vallon's son Amsterdam (Leonardo DiCaprio) returns incognito to Five Points, seeking satisfaction from Bill.

American critics have not been kind to Martin Scorsese's three-hour epic, 'Gangs of New York', complaining of its historical inaccuracies, its simplistic plotting, and the blandness of DiCaprio's central performance. Yet while the film may not be Scorsese's very best, it is certainly an estimable piece of work, and deserves to be defended against these objections.

Firstly, it is odd to criticise any non-documentary film, and particularly this one, for playing hard and fast with history. Scorsese is neither the first, nor indeed the last, to combine fact with fiction; and in any case, there is so much in this film, right down to the names chosen for its protagonists, to indicate clearly that a gospel version of history was never intended, that it seems perverse to quibble with the factuality of its details.

Secondly, to be sure the film's plot is quite simple: from within the first fifteen minutes it is perfectly clear that the film will follow a revenge formula as old as story-telling itself, and that it will end with a confrontation between Amsterdam and Bill. Yet what makes this film so engaging is not its principal story, but the wealth of background detail woven into its thread, creating a convincing portrayal of an entire society at odds with itself. By the time the film reaches its climax, Bill and Amsterdam's standoff at Five Points, far from being the simple personal vendetta which we have expected from the outset, instead provides the focus for a myriad of more fundamental conflicts. The film shows Protestant divided from Catholic, English divided from Irish, native from immigrant, white from black, rich from poor, one political party from another, and the whole country torn apart by the Civil War. Everyone, it emerges, belongs to one gang or another, and it is impossible not to take sides.

So Scorsese uses his plot, for all its simplicity, as the vehicle for a complex analysis of the divisiveness which lies at the very heart of the so-called United States, both past and present. At the film's close, a timelapse sequence shows the New York City skyline emerging from the ground, ending with the rise of the Twin Towers. We expect them to disappear, but instead they remain on the screen, like two great warriors in a face-off - defiantly opposed, and doomed some day, like all Scorsese's divided heroes, to fall.

Finally, there is the acting. Daniel Day-Lewis puts in an extraordinarily rounded performance, aping to perfection all the vocal and gestural idiosyncrasies of Scorsese's long-time collaborator, Robert DeNiro, and making Bill Cutter seem by turns monstrous and heroic, terrifying and tragic. His acting greatly overshadows DiCaprio's, but it should not be forgotten that so does his character. Amsterdam is Bill's junior by some twenty-five years, and he is not so much interesting for the young apprentice he is, as for the professional butcher we can see him becoming. Cameron Diaz, as everyone's love interest Jenny Everdeane, is pretty, and pretty unconvincing, but this is unimportant, as Scorsese's preoccupations lie firmly, as usual, in matters masculine.

Don't believe all the negative press - 'Gangs of New York' is intelligent, well-crafted, and definitely worth a look.

Anton Bitel, 14.01.03



## CINEMA REVIEW

# Spider

David Cronenberg's latest film, a version of the book by Patrick McGrath, is a fascinating insight into psycho. Anyone who has ever felt their grip on reality slip, even a little bit, will have sympathy for the dreadful plight of the adult Spider, played excellently by Ralph Fiennes, as he relives his past - prompted by his wanderings around the home territory to which he has finally returned. It is possible for a long time throughout the film to hope that the memory-journey might be doing him some good; even at the finish, when no-one living has been hurt and Spider has an enigmatic half-smile, we are left wondering if perhaps it did...

Ralph Fiennes creeps around an East End that looks like it has been dragged screaming out of the Industrial Revolution like the depressive brother of the snuffling, be-trenchcoated flasher in Terry Gilliam's Monty Python cartoons. Extremely low on dialogue, this is like classic Ralp with added hallucinations: it is easier than ever to imagine a multitude of worrying thoughts bubbling away behind his green-eyed stare. Miranda Richardson is excellent - do not attempt to find out anything about her rôle before you see the film, and your experience will be all the better (and more like Spider's) for it. Gabriel Byrne is, well, Gabriel Byrne and Bradley Hall from Bognor Regis makes the boy Spider into a sweet, frightening (and frightened) creature.

There is a lot of weirdness in this film (as Cronenberg fans will be expecting), but the whole is so intelligently crafted with just the right amount of missing information to feed the imagination of the thoughtful viewer that the overall result is compelling and strangely beautiful. The products of Spider's 'beautiful mind' are far from being worthy of a Nobel prize, yet the way in which our experience of his life captivates us nonetheless is a tribute to Cronenberg and his cast. Not all webs of illusion can be neatly wrapped up in the sticky sentimentality and righteousness of a Hollywood happy ending.

Su Jordan

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**THESIS CHECKING, PROOF-READING.** WordsInTime. Oxford. www.wordsintime.com/students Telephone 0870 085 7012

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OXFORD MACINTOSH SOLUTIONS Ltd for all your Apple Macintosh Sales Services and Support. 0871 7170000 www.womsuk.com

## BANDS, DISCOS, LIGHTS

DISCO PA & LIGHTING EQUIPMENT: hire and sales. 118 Cowley Rd. 01865 722027  
DISCOS, KARAOKE AND EQUIPMENT HIRE: Dave Seamer Entertainments, (01865) 240054  
BANDS, DISCO, KARAOKE, equipment hire, from ODS. 01865 736660

## GIGS

**OPEN MIC NIGHT /** Mars Entertainments presents Delicious music. Free (band bookings call 07876 184523 / 07989 028522) / 8.30pm start. / Exeter Hall Pub, Oxford Road  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB /** Open Night - sing, play or just listen. £1 / 8.30 pm / Port Mahon, St. Clement's  
**THE ZODIAC.** 190 Cowley Road (Tel: 420042);  
**OFF THE RADAR / BARRY & THE BEACHCOMBERS / THE OTHERS /** The Point Presents. £5 (inc. Boogie Basement) / 7pm  
**SONIC.** Trance & Hard House DJs. £7/£5 (inc. Boogie Basement), 9.30pm **BOOGIE BASEMENT:** Soul, Funk & Disco. £5, 10.30pm  
**OXFORD DISCO NIGHT /** Music & dancing / 11pm - 2am / Freud's, Walton St; Tel: 311171

**TRANSFORMATION /** Indie Anthems & alternative Dance. £6 (inc. Juice Box) / 10.30pm / The Zodiac (see 17th above)  
**JUKE BOX /** Classic Chart, House & Dance tunes on request. £6 (inc. Transformation) / 10.30pm / The Zodiac (see above)  
**ZABADOO /** Latin jazz / 11pm - 2am / Freud's (details above)

**PIANIST /** 2-4pm, then VIVA SALSA! Latin dance from 6pm / Freud's (details above)

**COME PLAY /** Oxford's biggest student party! Resident DJs with Funky Pop & House. £3E4 / 10pm / The Zodiac (see above)  
**NEIL MASON /** Classical guitar / 10pm-midnight / Freud's (details above)

**Tue 21st SHARRON KRAUS & IAN TRACY /** Acoustic music, £3 admission / doors 8.30, music from 9.00 / Port Mahon, St. Clement's  
**ATHENA /** Jazz duo / 10pm-12am / Freud's (details above)

**Wed 22nd CATWEAZLE CLUB /** Oxford's longest running acoustic performance club for musicians, poets, storytellers & performers. £3/£2 / 8.30pm / Northgate Hall, St Michael's St  
**TRASHY /** Most glamorous club night in town. Glam Rock launch party featuring EASY TIGER. £4/£3 fancy dress or £4 / 10pm / 9pm / The Zodiac (see above)  
**FUZZY DUCKS /** Fun & mayhem at the best party night in town. Student ID required. £4 / 9pm / The Zodiac (see above)

**Thu 23rd SEXY BREAKFAST / SCFT / X-HAIL /** Local Music / 8pm / The Cellar, Frewin Court, off Cornmarket; Tel: 01865 244761  
**HELL IS FOR HEROES / THISGIRL / DAYS OF GRACE /** Top UK emo / hardcore heroes. £7adv/£8 door (incl. Saboteur after) / 7-10pm / The Zodiac (see above)  
**MORNINGTON LOCKETT /** Heavy sax-funk-influenced / £6 / 4 / Doors: 8.15, music: 9 / The Spin / The Wheatheaf, Wheatheaf Alley, 129 High St., 243276  
**VEDA PARK /** Jazz / 11pm - 2am / Freud's (details above)

**STARS** 11pm-2am unless stated  
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## FREVD

**FRI 17 SCHOOL DISCO NIGHT MUSIC & DANCING**  
**SAT 18 ZABADOO LATIN JAZZ**  
**SUN 19 PIANIST 2-4pm then VIVA SALSA! LATIN DANCE FROM 6**  
**MON 20 NEIL MASON 10pm-12 CLASSICAL GUITAR**  
**TUE 21 ATHENA 10pm-12 JAZZ DUO**  
**WED 22 VIVA JAZZ**  
**THU 23 LEDA PARK JAZZ**  
Acts 11pm-2am unless stated  
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## ACTOR NEEDED

**ACTOR URGENTLY NEEDED,** for Byron, in Brenton's 'Bloody Poetry'. Production at Brookes, late February. Contact Stewart Young: 01865 749459

## THEATRE

**Oxford Playhouse 305305**  
**DYLAN MORAN** Sat 18: 8pm  
Perrier Award-winning Black Books star on his UK tour. £7/£12/£15  
**THE BOY WHO FELL INTO A BOOK** Wed 22 - Sat 25  
Wed: 7pm Thu: 10am, 1.30pm Fri: 10am, 7pm Sat: 2pm, 5.30pm  
Fantasy adventure by Alan Ayckbourn. Ages 6+. £8/£13/£32 (family)  
**Pegasus Theatre 722851**  
**WACHA HABARI YAKO (STOP YOUR NONSENSE)** Sat 18: 8pm  
Voice Afrika present the other side of the Africa you see on the news. £5.50/£3.50/£2.50  
**HOPE FOR HUMANITY** Thu 23: 6.30pm  
Pupils from Oxfordshire commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day through music, drama & dance. £5.50/£3.50/£2.50  
**Old Fire Station Theatre 297170**  
**INSTANT WIT** Sat 18: 8pm  
Improv comedy show based on audience suggestion (with prizes & flying Instant Whip)  
**Burton Taylor Theatre 305350**  
**SOME VOICES** Tue 21 - Sat 25: 7.30pm  
Mental illness can happen to anyone... £5/£4  
**FAITH HEALER** Tue 21 - Sat 25: 9.30pm  
Conflicting monologues culminate in a horrific homecoming. £5/£4  
**Didcot Civic Hall**  
**LITTLE MISS MUFFET** Thu 23 - Sat 25  
Thu & Fri: 7.30pm Sat: 11am, 2.30pm, 7.30pm  
Panto by Didcot Phoenix Drama Group. £5/£3. Didcot Tourist Office, Civic Hall, Newbury Bldg Soc. or Ali: 01235 816715

## CINEMA

Until Thurs 23rd January

**Ultimate Picture Palace 245288**  
**DONNIE DARKO (15)** Daily: 9.15 Sun: 4.00, 8.15 Mon: 8.15 Tue: 5.00, 9.15  
Angsty teen America...with a giant malevolent rabbit. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

**NIGHT OF THE HUNTER (12)** Fri & Sat: 7.15 Sun: 6.15 Mon: 6.15  
A psychotic preacher after a widow's gold.

**MONTY PYTHON'S THE MEANING OF LIFE (18)** Fri & Sat: 11.30pm Sun & Mon: 10.30pm  
'I've had my people looking at this for some time...'

**THE BLUE ANGEL (PG)** Tue - Thu: 7.00  
Marlene Dietrich as the nightclub singer

**Odeon George Street 0870 5050007**

**GANGS OF NEW YORK (18)** Daily: 12.30, 4.15, 8.00  
Di Caprio, Day-Lewis, Diaz & Broadbent in Scorsese's 19th century NY. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

**8 MILE (15)** Daily: 12.15, 3.00, 6.00, 8.45  
Eminem stars in biographical tale

**SWEET HOME ALABAMA (12A)** Daily: 11.45  
You can take a girl out of the South...

**THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS (12A)** Daily: 11.15, 12.00, 3.15, 3.45, 7.30, 7.45  
'Contains intense combat and fantasy horror'. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

**DIE ANOTHER DAY (12A)** Daily: 2.15, 5.15, 8.15  
Bond needs no introduction... See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

**STAR TREK: NEMESIS (12A)** Fri & Mon-Thu: 11.30, 2.30, 5.30, 8.30 Sat & Sun: 2.30, 5.30, 8.30  
Captain Picard guides a Generation on its final journey

**THE SANTA CLAUSES 2 (U)** Sat & Sun: 11.30  
Thought Christmas was over, huh? Well, it isn't!

**ODEON SENIOR SCREEN: ABOUT A BOY (12A)** Wed: 10.45am.  
Over 55s only! Hugh Grant grows up

**Odeon Magdalen Street 0870 5050007**

**CHICAGO (12A)** Daily: 12.00, 2.45, 5.30, 8.30  
Zellweger, Zeta-Jones & Gere do sex & violence, 1920s-style

**HARRY POTTER & THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS (PG)** Daily: 12.30, 4.00, 7.45  
Contains intense combat & fantasy horror. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

**Phoenix Picture House 512526**  
**SPIDER (15)** Daily: 2.30, 4.45, 7.00, 9.15  
Ralph Fiennes in Cronenberg's latest psychodrama. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

**THE DANCER UPSTAIRS (15)** Sun: 12noon, 1.50, 6.40 Mon: 1.30 Tues: 1.30, 6.30 Wed: 1.30, 6.30 Thu: 1.30, 6.30 Fri: 1.30, 6.30 Sat: 6.30  
John Malkovich's directorial debut: threat of revolution in Latin America

**28 DAYS LATER (18)** Fri & Sat: 11.30pm  
Rage-making virus escapes lab. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

**CITY OF GOD (18)** Sun: 4.10, 9.10 Mon: 4.00, 9.00 Tues: 4.00, 9.00 Wed: 4.00, 9.00 Thu: 4.00, 9.00 Sat: 4.00, 9.00  
Fact-based story of life in the slums of Rio de Janeiro. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

**MORVERN CALLAR (15)** Fri & Sat: 11.15pm Sun: 12noon  
Publishing the dead boyfriend's book... See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

**KIDS CLUB: CATS & DOGS (PG)** Sat: Fun 1.15, film 2.00  
NO UNACCOMPANIED ADULTS  
Animated silliness as the species wage war

**LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE (PG)** Sun: 12noon Mon: 6.45  
Vertigo & the Beast. Jean Cocteau's erotic 1946 version

**VERTIGO (PG)** Thu: 11.15pm  
James Stewart & Kim Novak in Hitchcock's best film

**NINE QUEENS (15)** Thu: 11.30pm  
Seductive Argentinean heist thriller in which nothing is what it seems

**Modern Art Oxford 722733**  
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**Fri 17th**  
**OXFORD VEGETARIANS /** Dining Out Group. Reservations: Penny 438321 / 07951 793074 (or just turn up) / 7.30pm / The Nosebag, St. Michael's St.

**Sun 19th**  
**UNIVERSITY SERMON /** Prof Richard Sharpe, Professor of Diplomatic Modern History / University of St. Mary the Virgin, High St., 10am

**Mon 20th**  
**AL-ANON /** Weekly meeting for friends & family of problem drinkers. Helpline: 020 7403 088 / 7.30-9pm / Botley Baptist Church Hall

**BEGINNERS MEETING /** Abingdon Astronomical Society / 8pm / Methodist Church Hall, Dorchester Crescent, Abingdon; Tel: 01491 201620

**THE ART OF GARDENING STUDY MORNING /** 'Machinery'. £12/session (£100/series) / University of Oxford Botanic Garden, Rose Lane. Tel: 286690, Fax: 286693

**Tue 21st**  
**BAMBOO SLIPS FROM CHINA /** Dr Wang Tao / OU Archaeological Society / 8pm, Pusey Room, non-members £2 / Keble College, Parks Rd; Tel: 272727

**'THE END OF THE POEM: SEA POPPIES BY H.D.' /** Professor of Poetry Lecture. With Prof. Paul Muldoon / 5pm / Exam. Schools, High St

**'GLOBALISATION & FINANCING THE WELFARE STATE' /** With Prof. Andrew Glyn, Oxford / A 'Current Issues in Social Policy' Seminar / 5pm / Dept of Social Policy and Social Work, Wellington Square

**Wed 22nd**  
**OXFORD GAMELAN SOCIETY /** Play the enchanting bronze orchestra of Javan! Beginners welcome / Ballouf Building, 60, Banbury Rd. / Contact: Martyn Bul 01235 815470 / Pete Smith 510815 / 8pm

**PHILOSOPHY SESSIONS /** Dealing with the most fundamental topics of human thought in a fresh manner. 07812 413335 / 8pm / Venue: tba

**ESPERANTO /** Praktika Vespero / 19.45 / 37 Granville Court

**CURATOR & THE COLLECTION: 'CARNA: A MEGALITHIC WONDERLAND' /** Prof Andrew Sherratt, Curator of European Prehistoric Archeology, Details 278015. Booking essential! / 1.15pm / Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont St. / Tel: 278000, Fax: 278018

**'BETWEEN MUSLIM TRIUMPHALISM & JEWISH RESISTANCE: LOOKING FOR ISLAMIZATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST' /** The David Paterson seminars / Prof. Fred Astren (San Francisco Uni.). All welcome / 8pm. Buffet from 7pm. / Yarnton Manor, Yarnton, Oxford OX5 1PY. OCHUS bus leaves 6.40pm & 7.45pm from Playhouse; leaves Yarnton 9.45pm. Single fare: £1.60 (£1.20 student). 377946 / Fax: 375079

**'REMBRANDT THE STRANGER: THE WIDENING GULF BETWEEN LIFE & WORK' /** Slade Lecture