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Oxford's WEEKEND INFORMATION

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SENSITIVE M. 31, tall, graduate, likes arts, travel, music. WILM want intelligent F 25-31 newyear@littleemerald14col.finet.co.uk

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MEETINGS/LECTURES

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Queries to dailyinfo@dailyinfo.co.uk

Sun 19th
UNIVERSITY SERMON / Prof Richard Sharpe, Professor of Diplomatic Modern History / University Church 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

GIGS

Sat 18th
TRANSFORMATION / Indie Anthems & alternative Dance. £6 (inc. Juice Box) / 10.30pm / The Zodiac, 192 Cowley Road. Tel: 420042

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)

Sun 19th
PIANIST / 2-4pm, then VIVA SALSAL! Latin dance from 6pm / Freud's, Walton Street. Tel: 311171

Mon 20th
COME PLAY / Oxford's biggest student party! Resident DJ's with Funky Pop & House. £3/£4 / 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. Clements

ATHENA / Jazz duo / 10pm-12am / Freud's (details above)

CINEMA REVIEW

The Pianist

Phoenix Picture House from Friday Jan. 24th



In a scene near the middle of Roman Polanski's Palme d'Or-winning 'The Pianist', seven men are selected at random from a line-up of Jews and forced to lie face-down in the mud. A German soldier moves rapidly along the row of prone men, shooting one after the other through the head. When the soldier has finished off the first six, his clip is empty; in a pause of five or so seconds that feels like a lifetime, the soldier carefully reloads his pistol, and then fires his seventh bullet...

This scene reflects a horrible truth about the fate of Jews under the Nazis: death was completely arbitrary and indiscriminating, and deprives from it were as rare as they were fleeting. 'The Pianist' is unflinching in its depiction of death coming to all Jews - rich and poor, young and old, male and female, brave and cowardly. All attempts to resist, including the 28 day Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943, are shown to prove futile against the Nazis' determined programme of extermination.

Yet 'The Pianist' is a tale of survival, based on the personal account of Jewish pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman, who stayed in Warsaw throughout the Second World War, miraculously escaping the many forms of death which confronted him there while all else around him fell.

At the film's 1939 beginning, Szpilman performs a piano recital for Polish radio which is interrupted when the building is bombed. Later, when he is forced to move to the Ghetto, he is able to continue playing for a Jewish restaurant, but again, each performance depicted in the film is interrupted. Later still, when he is holed up alone for months in a locked room, he cannot play the piano there for fear that the sound will draw attention to his presence, and so must resort pathetically to 'playing' the air, with his fingers suspended inches above the actual keyboard. All this dramatises the loss of identity and humanity suffered by the Jews at the hands of the Nazis. By surviving, Szpilman is able to regain his former identity and play classical piano again. Most others were less fortunate.

The experiences of Szpilman (played with convincing naturalism by Adrien Brody) offer no comfortable Hollywood narrative: it is not heroism or talent which saves Szpilman, but rather incredible luck and the occasional kindness of others. There is no special dignity, honour or justice in Szpilman's survival - all that singles him out from the tens of thousands of Jewish dead in Warsaw is the bare fact that he is still alive, and can give a testimony of their fate.

If I have any criticism of the film at all, it is of a sequence in the final fifteen minutes. Just before the German retreat from Warsaw, a Nazi Captain (Willem Hoesfeldt, played by Thomas Kretschmann) hears Szpilman play, and then unexpectedly decides to help him. This is unquestionably an extraordinary episode, and one of the most moving in the film. Yet Polanski overplays the similarity of Hoesfeldt's background to Szpilman's, showing a family photo from happier times that sits on Hoesfeldt's desk in Nazi Headquarters. This image, for all its sentimentality, strikes a jarring note, as it is one of the only things shown in the entire film which Szpilman could not possibly have witnessed himself. It is a pity to taint Szpilman's personal testimony with so glaring a piece of fiction.

This criticism aside, 'The Pianist' is a difficult but important film, made with unobtrusive art.

Anton Bitel, 14.01.03



OXFORD HISTORY

Christ Church has a reputation for roast wild fowl

FOOD AND DRINK

Cooper's Oxford Marmalade, exported to all parts of the world

and so to the pleasures of the table

Brasenose College makes lovely fondues

On Ascension Day Brasenose & Lincoln drink a special brew - Ivy Beer!

Merton College is famous for dressed crab

The 15th century was the Age of Hard Drinking

Jesus College serves leeks and welsh rarebit on St. David's Day

Magdalen College produces wonderful venison... (well, they have got a deer park!)

The Ceremony of the Boar's Head at Christmas at The Queen's College dates from 1340

OUR UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD...

Tony Martin is a Norfolk Farmer who shot and killed a burglar invading his home during the night a few years ago. He was convicted of murder (this charge was later reduced to manslaughter). He has just been refused parole on the grounds that he is "a danger to burglars". Do we take it, then, that the police officers in the recent police raid in Manchester are to be imprisoned on the grounds that they are "a danger to terrorists"?

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263 more on www.dailyinfo.co.uk

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JOBS OFFERED

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EXHIBITIONS

Christ Church Picture Gallery

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CINEMA

Until Thurs 23rd January

Ultimate Picture Palace 245288

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

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

MONTY PYTHON'S THE MEANING OF LIFE (18) 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) 3.15, 5.45*, 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) Sat & Sun: 2.30, 5.30, 8.30 Mon-Thu: 11.30, 2.30, 5.30, 8.30
Captain Picard guides a Generation on its final journey

THE SANTA CLAUSE 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) Sat: 6.30 Sun: 12noon, 1.50, 6.40 Mon: 1.30 Tues: 1.30, 6.30 Wed: 1.30, 6.30 Thu: 1.30, 6.30
John Malkovich's directorial debut: threat of revolution in Latin America

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

CITY OF GOD (18) Sat: 4.00, 9.00 Sun: 4.00, 9.10 Mon: 4.00, 9.00 Tues: 4.00, 9.00 Wed: 4.00, 9.00 Thu: 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) 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 Beauty & the Beast: Jean Cocteau's erotic 1946 version

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

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

*=Wheelchair access

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