Oxford's DAILY INFO

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Next issue: Thu 22nd January
Deadline: 10am, Wed 21st January

Tue 20th & Wed 21st January 2009 (1st week)

WHAT'S ON / COMING SOON

Pro- & ANTI-

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CINEMA to Thu 22nd

Vue Cinema (08712 240 240)

SEVEN POUNDS [12A] daily: 11.50am, 2.30, 5.15, 8.00pm
Will Smith tries to make up for manslaughter with suicide.

SENIOR'S CLUB: STONE OF DESTINY [PG] Tue: 12.30pm
The story of Ian Hamilton, 1950s Scottish nationalist.

INKHEART [PG] ✍ daily: 12.10pm
Hapless father Brendan Fraser causes invasion of reality by storyland forces.

MADAGASCAR: ESCAPE 2 AFRICA [PG] ✍
Cuddly CGI zoo escapees try to reach African continent. Mon - Thu: 12.45, 3.30pm

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA [U] ✍ daily: 1.45, 4.00, 6.15pm
Posh dog, voiced by Drew Barrymore, gets lost in Mexico.

THE READER [15] ✍ Mon - Thu: 12.30, 3.10, 5.50, 8.45pm
Post-WW2 strange romance.

AUSTRALIA [12A] ✍ daily: 8.30pm
Nicole Kidman as English aristocrat encountering the outback.

YES MAN [12A] Mon - Thu: 7.00, 9.30pm
Jim Carrey undertakes not to say "no" for a year.

BEDTIME STORIES [PG] Mon - Thu: 12.00pm
Hapless handyman sees stories come true.

DEFIANCE [15] daily: 2.40, 6.00, 9.15pm
Daniel Craig as Polish-Jewish fighter in Russian resistance.

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE [15] ✍ daily: 12.15, 3.00, 5.40, 8.15pm
Impoverished Mumbai teenager (Dev Patel) wins gameshow.

BRIDE WARS [12A] Mon - Thu: 1.00, 3.20, 5.30, 7.45, 10.00pm
Wedding rivalry flick for the less discerning chick. Subtitles Wed 7.45pm.

THE WRESTLER [15] Mon - Thu: 2.15, 4.45, 7.15, 9.45pm
Mickey O'Rourke as ageing wrestler.

ROLE MODELS [15] ✍ Mon, Wed & Thu: 2.00, 4.15, 6.30, 9.00pm
Hapless men on probation try to help teenagers. Tue: 2.00, 4.15, 9.00pm

Phoenix Picture House (0870 758 3218)

THE BIG SCREAM: THE READER [15] ✍ Wed: 11.30am
Law student (David Kross/Ralph Fiennes) re-encounters his former lover (Kate Winslet) in sinister circumstances. Exclusive screening for parents with children under one.

THE READER [15] ✍ Tue, Thu: 12.30, 3.00, 6.00, 8.45pm
Mon: 12.30, 3.00, 8.45pm Wed: 3.00, 6.00, 8.45pm
Complicated love affair in post WW2 Germany.

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE [15] ✍ daily: 12.45, 3.30, 6.15, 9.00pm
Impoverished Mumbai teenager (Dev Patel) wins gameshow. Danny Boyle directs.

AÑO UÑA [15] Mon: 6.30pm
Accomplished experimental Mexican love story composed of photos and dialogue.

Odeon Magdalen St (0871 2244 007)

MILK [15] Tue: 8.45pm
Story of life & assassination of California's first openly gay elected official, Harvey Milk.

YES MAN [12A] Mon, Wed & Thu: 1.00, 3.30, 6.15, 8.45pm
Jim Carrey undertakes not to say "no" for a year. Tue: 1.00, 3.30, 6.15pm

SEVEN POUNDS [12A] Fri, Mon - Thu: 2.30, 5.30, 8.30pm
Will Smith tries to make up for manslaughter by altruistic suicide.

Odeon George St (0871 2244 007)

SENIOR SCREEN: BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS [12A] ✍
Concentration camp commander's son befriends Jewish boy. Wed: 10.45am

TWILIGHT [12A] ✍ Fri, Mon - Thu: 5.30pm
Fang-in-cheek teen American vampire love story.

THE READER [15] ✍ daily: 8.00pm
Mysterious love story with Ralph Fiennes, Kate Winslet and David Kross.

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE [15] ✍
Fri, Mon - Thu: 12.00, 2.45, 5.30, 8.30pm
Vibrant tale of life on the streets of Mumbai.

DEFIANCE [15] Fri, Mon - Thu: 2.15, 8.15pm
Daniel Craig as Polish-Jewish fighter in Russian resistance.

ROLE MODELS [15] ✍ daily: 1.30, 4.00, 6.30, 9.00pm
Comedy about men on probation helping teenagers.

THE WRESTLER [15] daily: 3.15, 6.00, 8.45pm
Mickey Rourke as Randy "The Ram" Robinson.

MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE 2 AFRICA [PG] ✍
Mon - Thu: 2.15, 8.15pm
The cuddly zoo escapees try to reach the African continent.

BRIDE WARS [12A] daily: 1.45, 4.15, 6.45, 9.15pm
Two friends schedule their weddings for the same day. With Anne Hathaway.

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA [U] ✍ Mon-Thu: 1.15, 3.30, 5.45pm
Posh dog gets lost in Mexico.

BEDTIME STORIES [PG] daily: 12.00pm
Hapless handyman sees stories come true.

AUSTRALIA [12A] ✍ daily: 11.45am
Prettily shot period epic with Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman.

Ultimate Picture Palace (245288)

AUSTRALIA [12] ✍ Mon - Thu: 7.30pm
Sweeping period epic from Baz Luhrmann with Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman.

East Oxford Community Centre

MEPHISTO - CREDIT CRUNCH CINEMA ✍ Wed: 6.30pm-11pm,
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MEETINGS & LECTURES

Tue 20th

DEUTSCHSPRACHIGER STAMMTISCH / We meet every Tuesday to speak German, play games and organise other activities. / 8:30pm, Free, All welcome / deutscherstammtisch‰yahoo.co.uk / Anchor Inn Pub (corner Kingston Road/Polstead Road)

AN EVENING WITH JOANNA TROLLOPE / The guest speaker this month. / Abingdon Mostly Booklovers Literary Society / 7.30pm, £6 from Mostly Books, 36 Stert St, Abingdon OX14 3JP / (01235) 525880 / School of St Helen and St Katharine, Faringdon Road, Abingdon

AMNESTY GROUP MEETING / Regular monthly meeting with letter writing; speaker; forward planning. / Oxford City Amnesty Group / 7:15 - 9pm; free admission / michaelamnesty‰yahoo.co.uk / www.amnesty.org.uk / 0870 321 6924 / Oxford Town Hall, 109-113 St Aldate's

GLOBE CAFE / Friends, coffee & conversation for international students and visitors in Oxford / 8-10pm, free refreshments / 07925 394122 / richard.power‰standrewsoxford.org / www.globecafeoxford.org.uk / St Andrew's Church, Linton Road, Oxford; Tel: 01865 311212

MUJERES HISPANOPARLANTES / Nos reunimos para charlar e intercambiar experiencias / 7.30pm / 07726 465461 / The Lamb & Flag

LONGITUDE REVISITED / Dr Jim Bennett talks about James Short and John Harrison's work on longitude / Public Lecture / 7pm, Admission Free / museum‰mhs.ox.ac.uk / www.mhs.ox.ac.uk / 01865 277280 / Museum of the History of Science , Old Ashmolean Building, Broad Street. 12-5 Tue-Fri, 10-5 Sat, 2-5 Sun.; Tel: 01865 277280

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT / Six sessions on sustainable transport, covering local & international questions / Oxford Transport Network / 5pm, £6 / lara.scott‰ouce.ox.ac.uk / http://oxtran.tsu.ox.ac.uk / 01865 285533 / School of Geography, Mansfield Rd

Wed 21st

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION / Meditating in the Christian tradition as taught by John Main. Beginners welcome! / 7.25pm / £2 donation / 01856 515458 / www.wccm.org / 2, Canterbury Road, OX2 6LU

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS / How to use keywords to improve your website's search engine ranking & improve your conversion rates. Friendly, interactive breakfast seminar / 9-11am, £35 + VAT (incl. breakfast!) / info‰solve-the-web.co.uk / www.solve-the-web.co.uk/workshops / 01844 215101 / Solve The Web, Friday Court, North Street, Thame, Oxon OX9 3GA

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GEOPOLITICS OF ENERGY / Is Liquefied Natural Gas a solution to Europe's pipeline dependence? / OIES & St Antony's College / 5 pm, Free / sant0393‰herald.ox.ac.uk / www.sant.ox.ac.uk/centres/geopolitics.html / St Antony's College, Woodstock Rd; Tel: 284700

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GIGS

Tue 20th

THE HUGH TURNER BAND / Live jazz plus DJs playing r'n'b, funk and soul / The Oxford Jazz Club / 9pm. Free entry / Bullingdon Arms, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford; Tel: 244516

THE FIRRY MIC / Acoustic open mike. Songs, poetry, stories. / 8pm. Free entry / 01865 245290 / The Fir Tree, 163 Iffley Road, Oxford, OX4 1EJ

KERRANG RELENTLESS ENERGY DRINK TOUR 2009 / Featuring Mindless Self Indulgence, Bring Me The Horizon, Black Tide, In Case Of Fire, Dir En Grey / SJM Concerts / 6.30pm £14.68 / O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road; Tel: Box Office: 0844 477 2000 / Info 0905 020 3999 (25p/min)

OPEN MIC / From 7pm, free to perform / sammy_hanss‰hotmail.com / www.combibos.co.uk01865250072 / Combibos Coffee, Gloucester Green

Wed 21st

LIVE LOUNGE / open-mic session with Lee Davies / 8.30-11pm free entry / davies_77‰hotmail.co.uk / 07900 224988 / The Cape of Good Hope, The Plain

BLACK POWDER / Mutiny present Black Powder + Junke Brush + Alley Rats. / 8pm , free/ www.theblackpowder.co.uk / The Purple Turtle Frewin Court

ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX REGGAE NIGHT / With Lorna Asher & Wayne McArthur / Bullingdon Arms, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford; Tel: 244516

PONT MUSIC – OPEN MIKE / We have amps, you have talent, or just applaud. All welcome, have fun. / 8ish till 11. Free Entry / PontMusic‰aol.com / 07769 608124 / Folly Bridge Inn, Abingdon Road; Tel: 01865 790106

DANCEHALL NICE AGAIN / Cornerstone musik's DJ Baps & Nico D + guests. Ska Roots Dancehall / Cornerstone musik Promotions / 8.00pm - 12.00am Free entry / cornerstonemusik‰aol.com / 07813 355448 / James St Tavern

THEATRE to Sat 24th

New Theatre (0844 8471585)

CIRQUE DE GLACE Thu 22nd & Fri 23rd: 7.30pm
Featuring the Russian Ice Stars. £12.50 - £26.50. Sat 24th: 2.30, 7.30pm

Oxford Playhouse (305305)

MARK WATSON Wed 21st: 8pm
All The Thoughts I've Had Since I Was Born tour. £15 (No discounts)

BALLETBOYZ Fri 23rd & Sat 24th: 7.30pm
Featuring behind-the-scenes films and archive footage. £11.50 - £18.50.

Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon

WYRD SISTERS - DIRECTOR'S CUT Tue 20th - Fri 23rd: 7.30pm
Sat 24th: 2.30, 7.30pm
New dramatisation of Terry Pratchett's novel by Stephen Briggs. £8

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CINEMA: Glenn Watson Interviews *Slumdog Millionaire* Director Danny Boyle (see reviews of the film below right)

British director Danny Boyle (*Trainspotting*) strikes gold with *Slumdog Millionaire* – an inspiring story of life, love and a famous TV show. Filmed in the slums of Mumbai, it's winning awards around the world. Danny sits in the hot seat and answers Daily Info's questions…

How did you get involved in *Slumdog Millionaire*?
My agent sent me a script and said It's about *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* I thought, who wants to make a film about that? Then I saw it was written by Simon Beaufoy who did *The Full Monty* and thought I'd better read it out of respect. I was gone after ten pages. I rang up the producers and went out to India. I just knew I was going to do it. You get this amnesia about the realities of making a film. It's like they say about women and childbirth – you forget how painful it is!

It's based on the novel, *Q&A*, by Vikas Swarup…
The film's very different. It's produced by Celador films. The guy who runs it created *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* and sold the show to set up Celador. He kept a lot of goodwill - so we were able to use the theme tune, format and title of the show. We couldn't use the Indian title as they feared it'd taint their programme.

There's an Indian 'co-director' credit at the end. How major was that co-direction?
Loveleen Tandan's a casting director (*Brick Lane, Monsoon Wedding*) – but I realized I was going to need her every day, to check things, make sure we didn't make any cultural mistakes. She was particularly involved with the kids as they didn't speak much English. So it felt appropriate to call her the co-director.

In one scene the young Jamal jumps into a cesspit – how did you film that?
It was a real latrine – but we dropped a tank into it and filled it with peanut butter and chocolate. So actually you could lick him! It's people's imaginations that make it work. The kid was pretty cool about it.

Was it a difficult film to shoot?
It took three months to prep, three to shoot. We had a lot of local people from Bollywood. In the West, actors are out of work most of the time. In India, every actor is working on half a dozen films at the same time. So they tell you when they're available. The Assistant Director was juggling phones to other assistant directors, booking people for a week next Thursday!

You got permission to film at the Taj Mahal though.
Everything's vetted by the Indian authorities. You have to be creative about presenting material to them. We said, there's a torture scene involving the police – and they said, 'Okay, as long as no one above the rank of inspector's involved'! But kids nicking things at the Taj Mahal? They didn't like that at all.

What was it like working with the kids in the film?
I like having kids on set – I behave like one myself, that kind of energy. The lad who played the young Jamal is middle class and has some English. We'd thought of doing all the kids in English but soon realized how fake that would be. As soon as they started performing in Hindi it came alive. The kids who played Salim and the girl Latika are slum kids. 'Slum' has a pejorative sense here but it's not like that there. They're very poor places and do get cleared away sometimes by the council but they're very proud, resourceful and full of industry.

What were your impressions of India?
I didn't see much of India – mainly Mumbai. I come from Radcliffe, a small place near Bury. So to be able do a film in Mumbai is amazing. But there was no problem. They're so busy getting on with their tiger economy that the British look a bit quaint really. You see Brits, Germans and Americans banging on desks at the airport, saying 'This is no way to run an airport!' But you've got to go with it – and if you do, it's a really generous place. You can't organize it. It's like the sea – it changes all the time.

The film is beautifully photographed.
We didn't look for beauty, we just tried to film what we saw. We shot in the slums whereas Bollywood films tend to go into studios, away from it. We didn't dress things, just shot it as it was.

You add a great dance sequence over the end credits – why?
You can't live and work in Mumbai and not dance – it's so natural. We originally had 5000 dancers – but that got cut to just fifty good ones at the front! We shot it over three nights at Mumbai's famous railway station – it's only available between 2am and 3am. Dev didn't dance really and felt like he was in his pyjamas! But A R Rahman, our musician, is a serious superstar in India – he's Michael Jackson, Tom Cruise and Bruce Springsteen rolled into one.

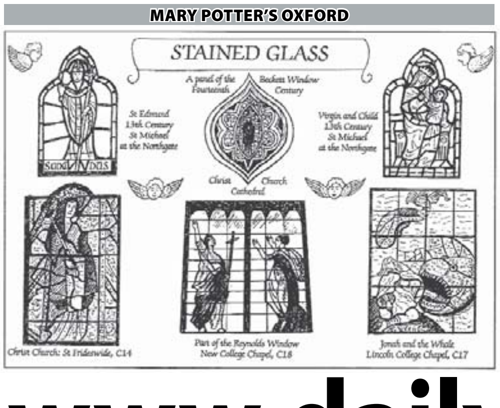
You've no plans to do a musical then?
I did a stage show at the RSC with a couple of numbers in it! It's a dream to do it. An original musical is the most difficult thing to do. So it was fantastic to just let loose in *Slumdog*! We thought of putting the dance sequence in the middle of the film but that really wouldn't have worked.

It's getting good reviews round the world. Did you wonder how it would play to different countries?
I thought it'd work here because of the connection with the show. And Dev Patel was in Channel 4's *Skins*. But the Americans – you underestimate how tied-in they are to the underdog story. It was going to be released by Warners but they passed it to Fox Searchlight who specialize in this kind of film. They did *Juno* and *Last King of Scotland* – low budget, breakout films. They marketed *Slumdog* really aggressively. I've done lots of cities and radio stations there.

Are there any similarities between this and your most famous film, *Trainspotting*?
Well there's a guy escaping down a toilet! No, you feed off each story. It's the films people don't like as much that you feel protective about. I'm lucky to be able to make films – getting the money to make them, working with such people. It's not a bad job really.

Glenn Watson, 12/01/09

MARY POTTER'S OXFORD



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LARGE 5 DOUBLE + 2 single bedroom house. Available immediately. £1850pcm. Tel. 07932 981347

THREE BEDROOM HOUSE: spacious and close to JR hospital, lovely back garden. Suitable for professionals/students. Available immediately. £1050pcm. 07920 775626. infobpm1@googlemail.com

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LITTLEMORE: ATTRACTIVE 3 bedroom house, good decor, lovely conservatory. Professionals / postgraduate students. Furnished, available now. £950pcm excl. 07824 773390 infobpm1@gmail.com

ROOMS TO LET

OX2 - BOTLEY ROAD.
4 double ensuite & 4 single rooms
available end Jan. for flexible lets (weekly or monthly short lets). Also available to let as a whole to a group.
Newly furnished, intercom, Sky+, DAB, up to 20MB broadband. 10 min walking distance to city centre. **Viewing available now.**
07841 698635 remosancar@gmail.com

MARSTON: LARGE DOUBLE room in nice, clean shared house, £400 inclusive. No couples. 07515 743096, 07516 873698.

COWLEY: TWO ROOMS in nice, clean shared house, £400 double, £350 single, inclusive bills, council tax and broadband. 07515 743096, 07516 873698.

LARGE DOUBLES, HEADINGTON. Sky+, wireless. £370 pcm excluding bills (£60pcm). 07709 350699 / alan@allawlor.fsnet.co.uk

DOUBLE ROOM FOR one person in Cowley. £380pcm inclusive. Shared amenities. Phone 01865 717646

A ROOM IN S.H. off Abingdon Rd, suit single prof/postgrad, all mod cons, part en-suite, available now: £510pcm inc. Tel 07501 152090

LARGE DOUBLE ROOM in lovely large refurbished 5 bed houseshare. Garden. Parking. Cleaner. Sky/broadband. Rooms from £490 excluding bills. Available now. poppylr@hotmail.co.uk

LIGHT AIRY ROOM and adjoining study in quiet family house available now for short or long let. Easy access by bus to Oxford Centre. Rent £500 per calendar month including all bills and broadband. pat@pbhuttalaw.co.uk

OVERLOOKING PARK. Single room for professional female in non-smoking all-female house, Dene Road, Headington. £290 pcm including C/tax, water rates and broadband. 01865 435543 / 07714 534729.

MONDAYS - FRIDAYS: single room in house. Islip village £235 incl. pip.whitb@talktalk.net

SINGLE ROOM IN lovely OX4 house with piano. £300 pcm excl. Professional only. 07970 533352, chrisjbird@gmail.com

GIPSY LANE: FURNISHED student single, non-smoking, broadband, lounge, washer. £299 pcm excl. till 31/8/09. bradyz@tiscali.co.uk

HEADINGTON, MASONS ROAD, £500 incl., available, couple, broadband. 07866 700703

IT IS A FULLY FURNISHED HOUSE with 4 double rooms + 1 single room. Shared bathroom, 2 seperate toilets, good size kitchen / dining area and all amenities, front and back garden. Contact me on 07943 198733

TEMPLE COWLEY SHORT LET February to May, possibly longer, prefer mature professional. £350 exclusive. deborah.caldwell@manches.com

CITY CENTRE SHORT LET, large room for couple, lounge, dining/kitchen, £600pcm all inclusive. lukejgander@yahoo.co.uk

OX3 LOVELY QUIET double available now - wireless broadband, TV, bathroom, walkable to buses for Oxford, London, airports. £400 pcm incl. tel 07814 715247 suze_engela@hotmail.com

WEEKDAYS ONLY, ROSE HILL single bedroom in quiet house. £14 a night. Broadband. Tel: 07811 042067 jacques@lauruol.freeserve.co.uk

NEAR THAME, COUNTRYSIDE, barn conversion, large single room, own bathroom, £545 pcm. Have a look, room 3, http://dairyrooms.googlepages.com

LARGE DOUBLE ROOM in bright, modern, furnished flat for professional, sharing with 1 other. Non-smoking. £450 excl. bills. christopherchild@hotmail.com

OX2 NORTH OXFORD room to let, £300pm incl, book now. 07538 354003

AVAILABLE NOW. DOUBLES in new shared house, East Oxford. From £400pcm incl all bills and unlimited broadband. Single occupation, NS. n.calvocoressi@macmillan.com

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PROFESSIONAL COUPLE SEEK 2+ bed charactered house, easy train to/in Oxford. No agents/timewasters. 07876 020150 willord@tiscali.co.uk

SONDHEIM AUDITIONS

ACTORS WANTED FOR SONDHEIM MUSICAL: Merrily We Roll Along. AUDITIONS: Tuesday 20th January 7-10pm, Thursday 22nd January 7-10pm, Saturday 24th January 5-8pm. PERFORMANCES: April 22nd-25th, OFS. www.tangenttreetheatre.co.uk tangenttreetheatre@hotmail.co.uk

CINEMA REVIEWS: *SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE*

Currently showing at The Phoenix Picture House, The Vue Cinema and The Odeon George St.

I disagree with the over-analysed criticism. Jamal goes on the show to find his girl not riches; his story is told in funny, horrific and touching episodes which I thoroughly enjoyed.
Undine, 19/01/09

1st half - Indie film with some dark moments. 2nd half - Hollywood and trite. The ending is awful and yes, feel-good for a Hollywood audience. Danny Boyle's visual style is truly unique and for this reason and the music it's worth seeing - but if you feel sick at Hollywood-style endings, avoid!
bloodclot, 16/01/09

I hate to be so contrary, but this film is not only bad, it's actually morally questionable. Explicitly, it's a film about rebellion against the (Indian) class system, the exploitative capitalism which underwrites it, and an entertainment system which keeps people drugged up to the eyeballs on cynical programming like *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* But the problem is, the film actually trades in crass, money-oriented fantasy and Hollywood/Bollywood clichés of the crudest kind. The film's structure - each question the central character answers, winning him more and even vaster sums of money, finds its answer in some degrading experience that he has had during his life in the slums - literally puts a monetary value on his experiences. We are invited to enjoy his story of horrific violence and injustice in exactly the way we enjoy *Who Wants to be A Millionaire* - because of how much money he's making. The film IS an episode of *Who Wants to be A Millionaire* interwoven with a story about a boy getting a girl and the money. Everything a slum boy could want, no? Like all of Danny Boyle's films, it has very loud music and lots of bright colours, which are designed to make us think it's a rambunctious story about rebellion and putting a finger up at the establishment, when its narrative structure, and the assumptions behind that structure, are crassly conservative and patronising.
Ben, 15/01/09

Exhilarating and dazzling, *Slumdog Millionaire* is possibly going to be the best film of 2009. And perhaps one of the best films ever made. Tragic, funny, thrilling and romantic, all of life is here. Danny Boyle (*Trainspotting, Sunshine*) directs with his customary energy. But even he excels himself. Visually stunning and sharp as a diamond, *Slumdog Millionaire* is a superhighway of emotional energy crammed into one breathtaking film.

Get past the quirky title and your natural wariness of the premise and give this a go. Director Danny Boyle did, originally put off by the pitch. Odds on for a slew of awards, it's already won a few, even if the Oscar itself proves elusive.

Jamal Malik (Dev Patel, TV's *Skins*) comes from the Mumbai slums. And he's only one question away from winning millions of rupees on the Indian version of *Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?*. But the producers can't believe he hasn't cheated. Arrested, Jamal recounts his life, telling how he came to know the answers to each question - and how his estrangement from a childhood friend led him to go on her favourite show.

Based on Vikas Swarup's bestselling novel, *Q & A*, *Slumdog Millionaire* is scripted by Simon Beaufoy (*Full Monty*) with a career-making performance from young Brit, Dev Patel. But this is no jingoistic take on Indian life. Boyle's crew filmed in the slums and the film fizzes with the city's culture and energy.

Indian co-direction, from Loveleen Tandan, led to the hiring of real-life slum children as the protagonists' younger selves: fantastic, sweet performances of cutting honesty. Good to know that the film company put the kids into education, in India, after shooting.

Slumdog Millionaire is at times a gangster film, a romantic comedy, a social commentary, a thriller, even a horror in one especially dark moment. But the zest for life runs throughout and it could easily be called 'It's a Wonderful Life'. After the emotional ups and downs, stay for the end-credit sequence, which sums up the film's true heart.

Not many films feature white-knuckle TV quiz scenarios, Oliver Twist shenanigans, police brutality, dunkings into cesspits and the rhythmic beat of romantic longing. If it has a cousin, it's *The Shawshank Redemption* - light similarly shining out of darkness. And if there's any justice, *Slumdog Millionaire* will get the same cult and mainstream following.

Vividly directed, awash with colour, and blessed with a scintillating score from A R Rahman, *Slumdog* is affecting on many levels. Shot by Oxford-born cinematographer Anthony Dod Mantle (Boyle's *28 Days Later*), it's a vibrant experience.

But at root, it's Dev Patel and the child actors from India who bring the film alive. It won't be everyone's idea of a popcorn movie - but that's what it is: a rollercoaster ride through the human heart.
Glenn Watson, 22/12/08