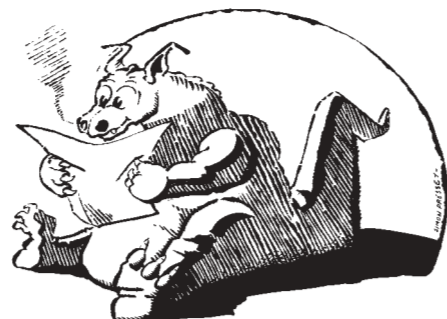


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Oxford Symphony Orchestra. Friday 8th March. Oxford Town Hall, 8.00 pm. Programme: Copland, Appalachian Spring, Gershwin Piano Concerto soloist Jack Gibbons, Dvorak. New World Symphony. Tickets: Oxford Playhouse £10 (£8), 01865 305305

Oxford University Philharmonia. Thursday 28th February. 8pm, Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford. Programme: Strauss, Tchaikovsky, Koehne. Tickets £8/£5concs from the Oxford Playhouse (805305) or on the door.

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MEETINGS

ECUMENISM - A FALSE DAWN ? / Talk by Fr Aidan Nicolls / Blue Room, Catholic Chaplaincy, Rose Place, St Aldates / 8.30 Thursday 7th Week / Email: john.wisdom@st-benets.ox.ac.uk
SEMINAR SERIES: BRITAIN AND THE WAR WITH NAPOLEON / Politics and music in Britain during the Napoleonic Wars / 2.15pm / Maison Francaise, Norham Rd, Oxford, OX2 6SE; Tel: 274220.
THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT ISLAM IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE WEST / Pro: Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Opp: Yvonne Ridley, To Decide: Dr Zaki Badawi, Yousuf Bhallo / 8.30 pm / Oxford Union, Frewin Court
OXFORD HUNGARIAN SOCIETY / Hungary in the 1970s / 8pm in MacGregor Room / Oriol College, Oriol Square; Tel: 276555
THE WITTENHAM CLUMPS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE PROJECT / Dr Steve Head £1 / 1.10pm / Plant Sciences Department, South Parks Road, Oxford

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CINEMA

To Thursday 28th February

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The French Revolution seen from the losing side.
THE DAY I BECAME A WOMAN (PG)
Tues-Thurs: 2.00, 5.00
Women at three stages of life in Iran
THE FLUFFER (18) Tues-Thurs: 1.30, 7.00, 9.10
Inside the gay porn industry
THE BELIEVER (15) Tues - Thurs : 6.40
Themes of religion, family, and self-loathing.
REQUIEM FOR A DREAM (18) Thur: 11.30pm
Comic hallucinatory despair.
WOMEN'S FESTIVAL: I ME WITHOUT YOU (15) Thur: 11.30pm
Two friends from the seventies to the present.

Ultimate Picture Palace 245288
MULLHOLLAND DRIVE (15) Tues - Thu: 7.45
Amnesiac lesbian crime mystery, must be David Lynch
THE OTHERS (12). Tue - Thu : 5.40
Kidman gets spooked.
BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF (15) Tue - Thu : 10.30pm
Period costume martial-arts werewolf movie, based on a genuine mystery.

Odeon George St 0870 5050007
GOSFORD PARK (15) Tues-Thur: 1.30, 4.30, 8.30
English domesticity with Robert Altman
ALI (15) Tues - Thurs: 12.15, 4.15, 8.00
Will Smith is the greatest...
CHARLOTTE GRAY (15) Daily: 2.15, 5.30, 8.30
A young Scottish woman joins the French Resistance
DON'T SAY A WORD (15) Tues - Thur: 12.15, 3.00, 5.45, 8.45
A psychiatrist's daughter is kidnapped...
IRIS (15) Tues - Thurs: 12.30, 6.00
Judi Dench in biopic of authoress Iris Murdoch.
VANILLA SKY (15) Tues-Thurs: 8.15
Womanising Tom Cruise gets his comeuppance.
LORD OF THE RINGS (PG) Tues - Thurs: 7.45
Epic fantasy adventure. (Possibly not suitable for under-8s)
OCEAN'S 11 (12) Tues-Thurs: 12.00, 2.45, 5.45, 8.45
Star-studded remake of 60s thriller

Odeon Magdalen St 0870 5050007
MONSTERS INC. (U) Tues - Thurs: 12.30, 3.15, 6.15, 9.00
Incapable furry fright-mongers.
IRIS (15) Tues - Thu : 2.45, 8.30
Judi Dench in biopic of authoress Iris Murdoch.
SHALLOW HAL (12) Tues - Thu : 12.00, 5.30
Gwyneth Paltrow in a 400lb 'fatsuit'. Another triumph of sensitive characterization.

SAVANNAH
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Filled with anticipation at the prospect of realising the carnivore's dining dream, my partner and I arrived at Savannah's grand glassy entrance bedrugged and cold on a wet Tuesday evening. Looking in through the ample windows as we drew up on our bikes (mooring is convenient and plentiful across the road), we noted that the majority of visible clientele were middle-aged businessmen. Easily the youngest and scruffiest customers in the place, this made no difference whatsoever to the extraordinarily high level of service which Savannah obviously prides itself upon. The maitre d' even cleaned my watery spectacles on HIS OWN TIE. Who could ask for more?

The specials on the menu were introduced to us as we took our seats. Savannah's mussels are rope-grown to avoid grit accumulation, and come in kilos and half-kilos, as mains and starters. We were informed that Savannah are so proud of their food that we would be able to see it all cooking in front of us at the steely open-plan kitchen in the restaurant's centre, and lo, we cast our eyes across to spot a huge steak sizzling busily on an enormous griddle. We were then brought complimentary still mineral water (Savannah's own) by a friendly waitress, who (after introducing herself by name) told us about the fabulous wine-tasting arrangement. Savannah is one of only a handful of UK restaurants where you can taste 3 wines before you buy, an experienced sommelier guiding you through the process with panache (aerating each wine by rolling it on the counter in ingenious specially-designed glasses). The restaurant also has a rather splendid reserve list which we ogled briefly.

The 1991 Gewürztraminer went splendidly with my mussels starter, and my partner (who works in the wine trade,

so should, I suppose, know) informs me that the Gran Recosid Crianza went very well with his 14oz sirloin and hand-cut chips. I don't eat red meat (oh, the irony), but fussy did not fancy any of the three vegetarian options on the menu, so plumped for a combination of accompaniments. I should point out here that all items at Savannah are individually priced. You buy your meat by weight, and pay for as much as you can eat or afford. Chips are separate at £2; asparagus at £3 (£5 for a starter size); sauces £1 each, and so on. This does lend a certain pleasing and lego-like simplicity to piecing together your ideal meal, but has the drawback of adding surprise dents to your wallet - dents which may, however, be compensated by other aspects of the experience.

To return to the food. After the excellent mussels and wine, I must say that I was slightly disappointed with my basil and tomato salad (were the tomatoes cooked?), have had more tender asparagus (wrong season...), and my artichoke hearts were slightly over-roasted. The mushroom sauce made a good dip, and I ate the delicious complimentary spinach, rocket and baby chard salad almost in its entirety. One must bear in mind that my meal did mainly consist of dishes meant to accompany fabulous meat, so much criticism here would hardly be fair. All in all, an excellent meal out, and at a total of £60 for two not exorbitant either.

Su Jordan, 25/02/02

You can link to the Savannah website from the Restaurants page of www.dailyinfo.co.uk

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By Harold Pinter. See review.
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HOUSEWORK / On until 15/03/02 / An exhibition of work by the art students at Christ Church / Christ Church Picture Gallery, Christ Church (entrance via Canterbury Gate / Oriol Square) Opening times : Mon-Sat 10.30-1.00, 2.00-4.30. Sun 2.00-4.30 ; Tel: 276172.

THEATRICAL NEEDS

MALE/FEMALE ACTORS required: Union Morris Room, Thursday 7-10, Sat 2-5.

All that's on this sheet and more at www.dailyinfo.co.uk

NO MAN'S LAND

Written & Directed by Harold Pinter
Playhouse until Saturday 2nd March

No Man's Land is about two writers, Hirst (Corin Redgrave), a successful poet and Spooner (Hugh Fothergill), a failed poet, who meet at Jack Straw's Pub on Hampstead Heath and return to Hirst's impressive, if impersonal, home for a drink. Hirst, a writer who has not written or published for quite some time, is unable to unlock his creative powers and is trapped, possibly as a result of his own success, in no man's land. His servants, Foster (Gary Shelford) and Briggs (Andy de la Tour) appear at times to have more control over their employer than he has over them. Spooner, a desperate man in need of some sort of haven, tries to awaken Hirst's creative powers thus rescuing them both from the no man's land.

This alcohol-fueled play leaves Hirst in a drunken stupor and Spooner locked in the room for the night at the end of act one. The next morning, Hirst, oblivious to the happenings of the night before, greets Spooner with a different name and proceeds to reminisce about their Oxford days. Spooner eventually joins in with Hirst, making connections with the past as he builds up to use the opportunity to ask for a job as his secretary. Alas for Spooner,



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Narcolepsy

BY NICK GILL BURTON TAYLOR TO SATURDAY 2ND MARCH

'Narcolepsy' is an exploration of the subconscious fears we all have, and the ways in which we may focus more readily on our fabricated phobias as a way of avoiding confrontation with our real-life problems. Paul's narcoleptic illness demonstrates this throughout the play, as he falls asleep more frequently in response to an increasingly stressed environment.

So, will you drift off through this production? Not into a deep sleep, at any rate. And if you do, it is difficult to place where the fault lies.

Gill's play is at times (truly) pathetic and witty, and the actors carried these points off well. The scenes involving both female characters were the most moving, with the actresses holding the audience in the palm of their hands from their first scene together, where they form a kind of disjointed triangular chant with Paul, gazing ahead blankly as he does when in a fit, and talking to him and each other dispassionately in the ensuing scenes like morbid ghosts. Flora Milne, (Hannah), played the doe-eyed lover to a tee, portraying her character with a hint of weariness even from the beginning, which works well once we discover her attention has not been devoted to Paul the whole time. Her blasé comments were effective in depicting her unreal existence in her boyfriend's dream-world, and also amusing, as when she cuts stars disturbingly casually on her arm, and as he attempts to persuade her into giving the knife up - 'I'm using it...' she says. Lorna Beckett, who plays Paul's mother, Eve, is impressive. Her voice trembles with emotion in this scene as her character struggles to maintain the droning, bloodless dignity

with which she has persevered so far, and which has resulted in such comic success.

The women are not the play's only assets, though! Sam Butler copes admirably with the task of being permanently on stage as the narcoleptic Paul, and he engages with the audience well when addressing them. The freshness of his expressions of love for Hannah when aligned with his confusion at his varying states of consciousness is also good. As for Will Tosh - a most convincing shrink! What a shame it is all an illusion and his character David is really only a friend of the family. Or is he? It is never clear whether he has had an affair with Hannah and eloped with her or not, but the situation, as usual, provides him with the classic line: 'You're not here.' 'No, well I suppose I'd better go then!', although Tosh distinguishes clearly between his capacity as a 'real' friend and dream shrink by moving behind and about his chair sharply at the interchange.

The overall production was good, but it was difficult to decipher what was real and what not at times, and the pace in the middle lagged - then again, both of these things may have been deliberate in order to communicate Paul's permanently semi-conscious state. Although it is never wise to overdo props, the background could also have done with a little more body than the hint of blue chair, window and goldfish bowl.

This was an interesting play, and performed well - just beware getting too confused!!

Henrietta Stackpole 26th February

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