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Next issue: Friday 31st January
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Thursday 30th JANUARY 2003 (2nd Week)

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GIGS

OH BROTHER WHERE ART THOU? / Bluegrass/ Appalachian/American Old Time music open session / Fox and Hounds, Weirs Lane off Abingdon Road / 8.30 p.m. / Email: taube.marks@lang.ox.ac.uk
KARL DEMATA / Blues guitar / 11pm-2am / Freud's, Walton St; Tel: 311171
AZUL - STEAMIN LATIN OUTFIT / feat. Roland Perrin (keys) £6 £4 conc / doors open 8.15; band on 9 / The Spin@The Wheatsheaf, Wheatsheaf Alley, 129 High Street; Tel: 243276
ED HARCOURT / Ex-Snug singer/songwriter. £9 adv. / 7pm / The Zodiac, 190 Cowley Road; Tel: 420042
HELSINKI/OKURA / £5 on the door £4 with flyer / Doors open 8:00 / Backroom @ The Bullly, 162 Cowley Road; Tel: 244516
FRAGGLE POP / Good Cheese, RNB / The Cellar, Frewin Ct., off Cornmarket / 8pm - 2am / www.noblenights.com / simonthenoble@hotmail.com

CINEMA

Until Thurs 30th January

Ultimate Picture Palace 245288
28 DAYS LATER (18) Thu: 9.15pm
Rage-making virus escapes lab. See review at dailyinfo.co.uk
ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER (15) Thu: 7pm
Manuela tracks the father of her dead teenage son
Odeon George Street
0870 5050007
GANGS OF NEW YORK (18) Thu: 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. See review at dailyinfo.co.uk
GHOST SHIP (14) Daily: 1.30, 4.00, 6.30, 9.00
Gabriel Byrne & fellow salvagers trapped in a haunted ship. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk
ABOUT SCHMIDT (15) Daily: 11.30, 2.30, 5.30, 8.30
Jack Nicholson & Kathy Bates in the tale of a failed man. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk
DIE ANOTHER DAY (12A) Daily: 12.30*
Bond needs no introduction... See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN (12A) Thu: 12.30*, 3.45*, 7.45*
Hanks, DiCaprio, Walken & Sheen in true story of successful conman
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. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk
PRE-RELEASE SCREENING: PUNCH DRUNK LOVE (15) Daily: 6.00, 8.45
Adam Sandler as small-time businessman on romantic journey. See review, above right
HARRY POTTER & THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS (PG) Daily: 1.45
Contains intense combat & fantasy horror. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk
Phoenix Picture House 512526
THE PIANIST (15) Thu: 3.00, 6.00
ONE HOUR PHOTO (15) Thu: 11.15pm
Robin Williams as photo obsessive. See review at dailyinfo.co.uk
SPIDER (15) Daily: 4.45, 9.15
Ralph Fiennes in Cronenberg's latest psychodrama. See review at www.dailyinfo.co.uk
THE EYE (15) Thu: 11.45pm
Scariest Far Eastern horror since the 'Ring' films
THE LAVENDER HILL MOB (U) Thu: 2.30, 7.00
Ingenious bullion robbery in one of Ealing comedy's finest

*=Wheelchair access

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THEATRE REVIEW

Lamos the Child Eater

Burton Taylor Theatre until Saturday Feb. 1st

Billed as 'dark comedy without the comedy' Sam Meeking's monologue-heavy and experimental tale of alleged child-murder opens on seaside sounds and Chantelle Staynings, as 'the Woman', throwing bread to imaginary front-row seagulls. With a seaside clown (played with nervous compulsion by Rhys Morgan) she begins a pretty but rather blank exploration of memories of tragedy and rumours of traditional English beach holidays, which occasionally strikes a bizarre contrast with the simple staging, modern costumes and young and handsome cast. But in a production which seeks to alienate and confuse the audience, perhaps this is all part of the plan. As the self-absorbed and nervous Professor, Thomas Richards navigates his way via long digressions through the Woman's stories/ seduction while the temper of the town veers between fairy tale and tabloid, pulled into a world of clumsy tragedy and minute self-examination by the idea of a child-killer; but the endless deconstructing of truth and expectation quickly reduces tragedy back to a sing-song, absurd blankness. Enter the child-killer himself, a vigorous and expressive Malcolm Cooks playing an upwardly-mobile derelict in dirty pyjamas, spitting, shouting and squinting with embarrassed depravity, defiantly refusing to define himself as either imaginary or real. From there, the slight story is embroidered and elaborated by this short cast of characters through a series of digressive monologues about life, childhood, study, love, memory and many other things. The glove-puppets mentioned in the publicity (written by Rhys Morgan) provide a brief highlight as their attempt to perform a chirpy children's' story is hijacked by increasingly desperate existential ravings, but all too rapidly the action returns to the complicated back and forth of dialogue which in the end returns nothing but a fairly banal tale of rumours, imaginary monsters, and elaborate nothings.

Jeremy Dennis, 28.01.03

EXHIBITIONS

Christ Church Picture Gallery

Durer and his contemporaries
Small display of Northern Renaissance prints (to Feb 16)
Country life
Landscape drawings from the permanent collection. Campagna, Carraci & more... (to April 27)
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MEETINGS/LECTURES

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'A BRITON'S ENVIED NAME: LOCAL DEFENCE FORCES, STATE CONTROL & THE POLITICS OF PATRIOTISM IN ENGLAND, 1793-1815' / With researcher Kate Watson. Part of the 'Britain & the war with Napoleon' seminar series. All welcome / 2.15pm / Maison Francaise, Northam Rd. Tel: 274220 / maison@herald.ox.ac.uk
'ANTI-DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGES & DEMOCRATIC SURVIVAL: ELITE REACTIONS TO EXTREMISM IN INTER-WAR EUROPE' / With Giovanna Capocchia, Magdalen College. West European Seminar Series. All welcome / 5pm / Maison Francaise, Northam Rd / Tel: 274220 / maison@herald.ox.ac.uk
EAST OXFORD STOP THE WAR / 1st meeting of this new local Stop the War group / 7.30pm / East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street
IRONING PERFORMANCE / Your local launderette becomes a space for arts events, talks & performances! / 7-8pm / Tru Wash Launderette, Windmill Rd, Headington
OXFORD GNOSTIC ASSOCIATION / Five husbands of the samaritan woman at well - named; free to all / Town Hall, St. Aldate's / Mr. R. Nijhar 0118 962 3200 / rajinder.nijhar@ntworld.com / 7.30pm / www.nijhar.freesevice.co.uk/sikhism.htm

THEATRE

Until Thurs 30th January

Oxford Playhouse 305305
SNAKE IN THE GRASS Tue 28th Jan - Sat 1st Feb
Daily: 7.30pm Except Fri: 8pm Thu & Sat Mat: 2.30pm
Alan Ayckbourn's latest explores family relationships in genre-combining style. £8.50-£21.50. See review above right
Burton Taylor Theatre 305350
LAMOS, THE CHILD EATER
Tue 28th Jan - Sat 1st Feb. Daily: 9.30pm
Sock puppets & a dancing monster as someone eats babies in a seaside town. £5/£4 See review above right
AN INDIAN AFFAIR Tue 28th - Sat 1st Feb.
Daily: 7.30pm
A woman's sense of longing becomes a powerful & dominant master... £5/£4



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CINEMA REVIEW

Snake in the Grass

Oxford Playhouse until Sat. Feb. 1st



In the garden where they played as children, two long-parted sisters gather after their father's death, but their relationship is threatened by a secret the family nurse is all too willing to tell. As night falls on the summerhouse, the sisters must each confront the ghosts of their pasts - but is there something more out there in the darkness? Ayckbourn's lively chiller is a safe bet for an easy evening's entertainment and will no doubt prove popular.

Battered ex-alcoholic Annabel has returned from Tasmania to inherit her brutal father's country house, but upon reaching the house, jet-lagged and tetchy she finds her father's nurse, Alice, waiting in the garden, ready with some news. The younger sister, Miriam (left behind all these years to care for her father whilst Annabel was living the fast life), killed the old man! And Alice, eager to go to the police, has a letter in the father's handwriting complaining he is being drugged. Should Annabel pay the nurse off to save her sister, or pocket the money herself? Is there no sisterly love?

When no bargain can be struck, the snake in the grass (we won't say who) is shoved down a well by psychotic sibling Miriam. Problem solved. But the centre of gravity shifts at that moment, possibly providing the key to the play. Until this point, older Annabel is in control; heir to the house, woman of the world, and arbiter of her murderous sister's fate, she has sought to minimize fuss, put things in order, and sell the house to move to "a nice two bedroom in Fulham". She is Tory woman. The blue-rinse audience in the Playhouse chortle at

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CINEMA REVIEW

Barry Egan has problems fitting in. Subjected to humiliation for years by his interfering sisters, he is shy and awkward, and prone to outbursts of violent rage. He lives alone, never travels, likes his human contact to be mediated through the telephone, and is obsessed with the special coupon offers found on



One of those miracles is the central performance which Anderson has managed to draw from Adam Sandler as Barry. Instead of relying on Sandler's loyal 'Saturday Night Live' fanbase, who will apparently cough up good money to see Sandler in any old role, however basic and basically annoying ('The Wedding Singer', 'Mr Deeds', etc.), Anderson has written a complex, deeply flawed character for Sandler, and Sandler in turn proves up to the challenge. The role of Lena is somewhat overshadowed by Barry's, and might have been more developed, but Emily Watson is, as always, a credible screen presence. Philip Seymour Hoffman, a regular in Anderson's films, here plays very much against type as Dean, a black-mailing mattress salesman whose trigger-response anger is a match for Barry's.

All in all, 'Punch-Drunk Love' is an eccentric entertainment which proves that even the most damaged and unwanted of instruments can, if treated with the right care, play a new tune. Recommended.
Anton Bitel, 26.01.02

supermarket products. Yet the unexpected arrival of both a used harmonium and Lena Leonard at his workplace early one morning fills Barry's life with a new sense of purpose.
With lines like 'I'm looking at your lovely face and I just want to smash it', 'Punch-Drunk Love' is a romantic comedy like no other, quirky and full of surprises. Thanks to Paul Thomas Anderson's tight script and direction, the film's many strange, often surreal details often turn out to be relevant in delightfully unexpected ways. Although it is an intimate affair, shorter in length and smaller in scale than Anderson's previous films ('Boogie Nights' and 'Magnolia'), it still shares with those epics a concern for coincidence and miracle.

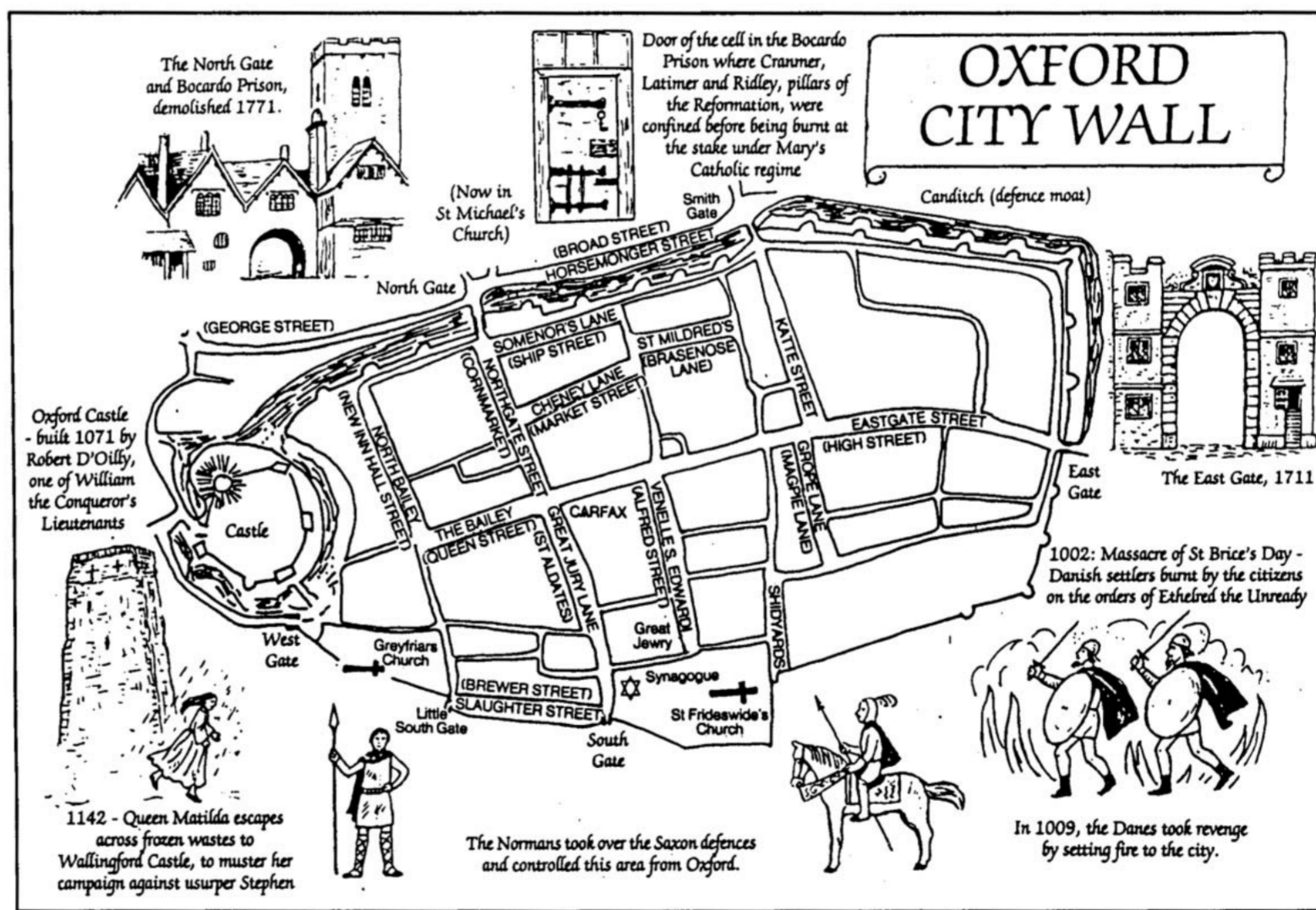
her wisecracks. When Annabel tells her tearful sister she "looks a mess" and deserves prison for being so stupid - not stupid for killing her father, but stupid for not getting away with it - you suspect these elderly patrons have said to their children, "pull yourself together", perhaps even, "get on your bike". But keeping a stiff upper lip can mean closing your eyes. The snake won't negotiate her blackmail demand. Miriam won't bow down, and keeps a-killing. The structure is reminiscent of Philip Roth's 'American Pastoral', in which the perfect teenage daughter of perfect parents in a perfect town becomes a terrorist, causing the bewildered parents to simply disintegrate. Crestfallen Annabel, grasping for pills as her heart weakens, must confront life as it is. The second half of the play explores the secrets lying at the bottom of Annabel and her sister's mental buckets - child abuse, domestic violence, and their general sense of failure.

One could complain that these last themes have been done to death since at least the early nineties. Whether Ayckbourn dressed it up as a ghost story, a comedy, or turned it into a punch and Judy show, this play would still consist of mixed-up characters seeking release-through-therapy, unable to become adults because of childhood traumas. Human nature is, in sum, pathetic.

Yet the play remains entertaining. The actors make the oddball characters curiously watchable. Rachel Atkins (Eastenders, Grange Hill) is nicely slimy as the snake, slithering about the attractive green set. One let-down is the few scary set pieces that are, at best, noticeable. The music, too, alerts us to when we should be scared in a rather unashamed manner.
Snake in the Grass is a nice play. Take your granny. She'll love it.

Ben O'Loughlin, 28.01.03

OXFORD INFORMATION



Taken from Mary Potter's Oxford Calendar, 1984

- The street names we have taken are all 13th century ones, found in 'Oxford Street Names Explained', a fascinating little volume by Paul J Marriott. Many of them have changed several times over the years: New Inn Hall Street was at one time "Seven Deadly Sins Lane", and St Aldates (probably "Old Gate") was "Fish Street" in 1379.
- It is possible that the "Somoner" has something to do with the "Summoner" (cf. Canterbury Tales), who would go ahead of the Pardoner, drumming up custom. The gullible sinner, in fear of eternal torment, would confess to sequestering his neighbour's duck or whatever, and receive a pardon for a sum which was then split between the Summoner and the Pardoner.
- Queen Matilda was the only surviving legitimate offspring of Henry 1st at the time of his death. Her cousin Stephen contested her right to rule on the grounds that women

were not really cut out for that sort of thing and bitter fighting ensued. Stephen eventually gained the throne but with the proviso that Matilda's son succeed him.
An iron cross in the road in Broad Street marks the spot where Cramer was martyred. His Prosecutor, Bishop Bonner, also came to an unhappy end in the Marshalsea (debtors) prison.
Shortly after the Norman conquest a community of Jews settled in Oxford on the West side of what is now St Aldates (presumably "Jury" here means "Jewry") and made their living mainly by money-lending. At the beginning of the 13th century, the Chancellor was getting so many complaints of students unable to continue their studies because they had pawned their books that he prevailed on the King to fix a special maximum rate for Oxford students - of 43 and a third percent. When King Stephen came to power, he trebled the tax on Jews levied by Queen Matilda and burnt down their houses if they refused to pay. The synagogue, more or less next door to St. Frideswide's, was

established by the middle of the 12th century, but the only Jewish burial ground in the whole country was in London until 1177, when they were given some land in east Oxford. There were frequent raids by debtors to destroy the money-lending documents, and friction increased throughout the 13th century. Relations were not improved by the introduction of a Community of Blackfriars in the hope of converting the Jews to Christianity, and in 1290, Edward 1st expelled all Jews from the country. They were allowed to take their personal possessions, but all fixed property passed to the crown. They were not officially readmitted until 1656, though it is likely that some had managed to find a niche in the University, and "Jacob the Jew" opened his Angel coffee house in the High Street in 1650.
To see what remains of the city wall, look at the north side of New College, the east side of Longwall Street bordering on Magdalen, and part of the south wall of Merton.

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