

THE-REX

M A G A Z I N E



THE TEMPEST

APRIL 2011...

"possibly Britain's most beautiful cinema..." (BBC)

APRIL 2011 Issue 73
www.therexberkhamsted.com

01442 877759
Mon-Sat 10.30-6pm Sun 4.30-5.30pm

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Simon Messenger	Roz Wilson
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	Yalda Yazdanian

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Alun Rees Chief projectionist (Original)

Jon Waugh 1st assistant projectionist

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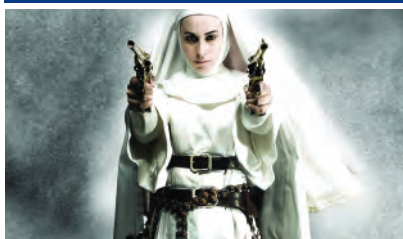
The Rex

High Street (Three Close Lane)

Berkhamsted HP4 2FG

www.therexberkhamsted.com

BEST IN APRIL



Somewhere out there a dirty habit lurks...
 UK 2010

Nude Nuns with Big Guns Mon 31 7.30

FILMS OF THE MONTH



Run for cover. As gripping as any thriller...
 USA 2010

Inside Job Mon 4 7.30



At first it seems a tale of ordinary ugly people.
 Australia 2010

Animal Kingdom Thu 7 /Fri 8 7.30



Italian coming-out family fun with a great granny. Italy 2010

Loose Cannons Wed 20 7.30

SPEECHLESS & PRICELESS...



Courtesy of David Satchell

On Saturday 19th February it rained all day. At 8.00 four people had gathered on the balcony. By 10am it was down the steps and around the corner past Berkhamsted's landmark plane tree.

By 10:30 it was a long way down the High Street with no sight of the other end. Astonished passers-by wouldn't believe we weren't 'selling' something other than our usual monthly ticket-release; while others were convinced people were just joining it because it was a queue! It is true March's programme was crammed with Black Swans & True Gits, the second run of the Kings Speech and other Oscarettes, but these had all been on release for weeks. After six years, people are still voting with their feet in the rain, to wait until it comes to the Rex. This was our longest and wettest queue to date. So I thank everyone who joined it, especially those who knew what was at the other end, and thought it worth the wait.



Courtesy of Amberly Rose

NO TRAIN NO PAIN...



High Speed Rail latest: Chilterns MP Cheryl Gillan has been forced to change her (govt whip) stance of being unable to speak out for her constituents because of her cabinet position. She has the Welsh Office; a punishment by any other name. Now she has broken silence to support the growing High Speed protest. In a recent statement she declared. "The current proposals are unacceptable. It is not a case of Nimbyism, it is that designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are, by definition, national treasures for all of us. A train ripping through the heart of the Chilterns is no way to address economic issues." She went on to pay lip service to the environment and quality of life etc. Keep at her and don't let her off this new promise to oppose the High Speed train.
Ps The Railway Children is showing here on Mon afternoon 11th April.

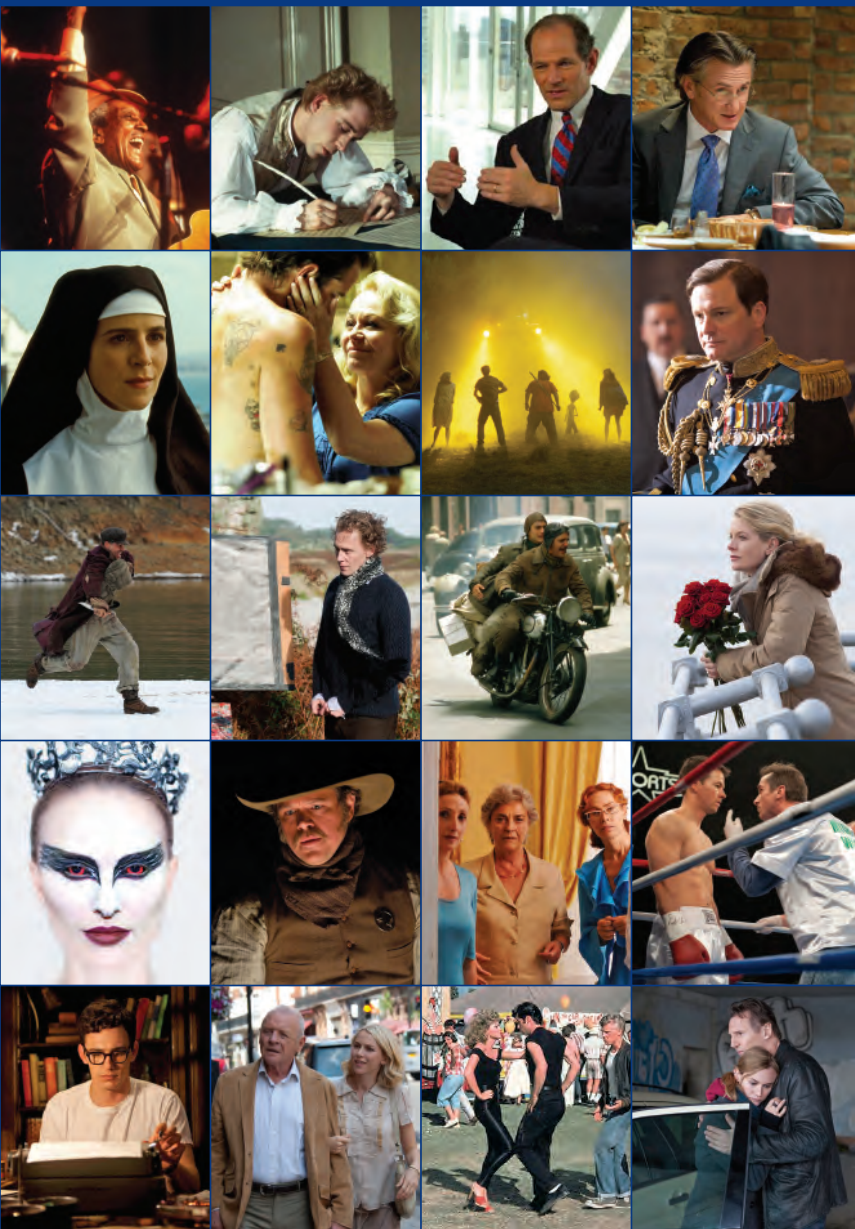
On a cold, wet miserable March evening (27th 2001) hundreds came to see inside the derelict Rex, first opening in 13 years. It was the beginning. Picture shows foyer & steps (boxed in) up to Gatsby restaurant. (More in May)

Gazette – March 2001



The dilapidated state of the Rex interior, above, will undergo a transformation over the coming months.

away of One Screen Pictures said he was still talking seriously with the developers. mystery bidders have also submitted schemes. In its heyday, the Rex, which had a fanfare when it opened as King Home's scheme



A P R I L E V E N I N G S

True Grit

Fri 1 7.30, Wed 6 7.30



The deservedly Oscar nominated, Hailee Steinfeld plays a plucky young girl who hires an ageing US Marshall to avenge the death of her father. Bridges plays that Marshall: the nearly incomprehensible Rooster Cogburn. His mumbling doesn't matter. It's her lines that tell the story, but it's Jeff's face that defines the Wild West in all that we've ever expected it to be. Ethan Cohen admitted: "We were aware if the kid doesn't work, there's no movie." They got her right. The kid works in screen-loads.

The Presbyterian/puritanical language of the time wins on every level. It's brilliant delivery by all, uses the full expression, energy and inflection to fill the place of happily absent four-letter words.

The cowboys are gritty and dirty and spit as they articulate through bad teeth. They are as unwashed as Roger Deakins' lens, captures beautifully, the washed out landscape of leafless trees and cold, grey scrubland.

Watch out for Barry Pepper as Lucky Ned Pepper and see if you can count how many times you've seen him as the out and out baddy or menacing psycho cop. The disappointment, often the sin of the Coens, comes at the end. While the faces are brilliant, the film is not worth all the noise, though not to be missed either.

Director: Coen Brothers
Starring: Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon, Hailee Steinfeld, Josh Brolin
Certificate: 15
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: USA 2011
By: Paramount International Pictures

Paul

Sat 2 7.00

Director: Greg Mottola
Starring: Sigourney Weaver, Simon Pegg, Nick Frost, Seth Rogen
Certificate: 15
Duration: 104 mins
Origin: France, UK 2010
By: Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

Could the Simon Pegg/Nick Frost double-act be showing a few wrinkles? Taking their brand of home grown humour across the Atlantic feels a little awkward. Thankfully, this sci-fi comedy cum road movie capers along with enough pace to forgive the misfires.

Pegg and Frost star as a pair English nerds road-trippin' through the US to reach Comic-Con. "Their pilgrimage takes them to Extraterrestrial Highway, where they manage to pick up potty-mouthed 'gralien' called Paul, then tear cross-country in a campervan with ET onboard and men in black on their tails." (*Total Film*)

This isn't your typical extra terrestrial, not only voiced by Seth Rogen but encompassing his personality too, Paul farts and flashes his way through the story. Whether that angle of humour is your cup of tea or not, Paul's vulgarity becomes a surprising distraction to the film's weaker moments.

The driving force behind Shaun of the Dead and Hot Fuzz, Edgar Wright, is evidently missing. Instead Gregg Mottola takes the reins and happily dips into the current US comedy pool including: Kristen Wiig, Bill Hader and Jason Bateman. Paul is smothered in 'geekisms'; every scene is stuffed with winks, nods and Easter eggs, a cavalcade of anal probe jokes, swear words and pot smoking. George Lucas devotees beam up here. (review Jack Whiting) Worth seeing.



The King's Speech

Sun 3 6.00, Tue 5 7.30



Hyped to the royal hilt, yet for once it not only doesn't get in the way, the film, performances and screenplay transcend the circus.

It opens with a moment of sheer terror for any stutterer. The then Prince Albert, the Duke of York, second in line to the throne, attempts to make his first mass public speech at Wembley stadium to close the 1925 British Empire Exhibition. It is also a first to be broadcast across the Empire through the new fangled miracle of radio.

Given that the family job is talking, a stammer is not the best of gifts. The Duchess, Elizabeth tires of conventional 'wisdom', so discovers the unorthodox treatment of Australian speech therapist Lionel Logue. The shy, diffident 'Bertie' could afford to play the royal brother in the shadows while his popular, but flawed, brother David (Edward VIII) remained King. But with Edward's abdication and a war looming, he would have to become George VI with an urgent need to address his people fluently. It is a beautiful study in the subtle, shifting balance of power and respect. So too, as both a piece of lost history and a great screenplay, it is a beautifully written, beautifully staged conversation between two people whose evolution into trusted friendship, is exquisitely drawn by actors whose restraint shows no signs of acting. Perfect.

Director: Tom Hooper
Starring: Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush, Helena Bonham Carter, Michael Gambon
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 111 mins
Origin: Australia, UK 2010
By: Momentum Pictures

Inside Job Mon 4 7.30

Director: Charles Ferguson
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 109 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Sony

Big shot creep, Hank Paulson says. "If you're growing, you're NOT in recession ... right?" Paulson's shrugging remark sums up the attitude of super-rich bankers and their eager and hopeful small-fry to big shot political supporters.

Charles Ferguson's documentary about the great financial crash lays out an awful story. In the 1980s, the markets and financial services were deregulated (ie they could promise anything to anyone, and did). The good times rolled. The banks ballooned. Chillingly, the banks now had a vested interest in selling insanely risky products, as they themselves were lavishly insured with rizla safe 'guarantees'. Perhaps the most sensational aspect is Ferguson's contention that the crash corrupted the discipline of economics itself. He speaks to many of these economists, who clearly thought they were going to be interviewed as wry, dispassionate observers. It is really something to see the expression of shock, outrage and fear on their faces as they realise they're in the dock. One splutters with vexation; another gives vent to a ripe Freudian slip. Asked about his behaviour and any regrets: "I have no comments ... uh, no regrets." There is a revolving door between the banks and the higher reaches of government, and surprisingly the groves of University academic advisors. Bank CEOs become government officials, creating laws convenient for their games. (research Guardian – well it would be wouldn't it?)

"As gripping as any thriller. Ferguson knows how to break down a subject to make fresh sense, to corner those running for cover with killer questions." (*Telegraph*) This is vital film making. Drop broken dreams to come.



Animal Kingdom

Thu 7 7.30, Fri 8 7.30



A very big thank you to Optimum for letting us preview this in celebration of the Rex' sixth anniversary in December, and so far ahead of general release in March 2011.

Much of the fascination with The Godfather and yarns of similar ambition derives from a conflict of loyalty: Is it better to do what's right, or is it more 'right' to stand by family no matter what? "This extraordinary Australian drama has the novel idea to explore this dilemma through a character with no personality whatsoever. As it turns out, no personality goes a long way." (*Time Out*) Our hero is mainly a fly on the wall, more interested in not doing much, getting high and mucking around with an equally disaffected girlfriend than he is in his uncles' affairs. There are wierd twists in this slow burning thriller. Guy Pearce is always a great presence, though his fame blunts its authentic spike. At first it feels like a tale about unfamiliar and ordinary faces, which explodes unexpectedly and doesn't stop exploding. The family is grubby, the setting low-life. Its authentic filming seems two dimensional a bit like 'Neighbours' (without a Kylie or Jason in sight) where you don't quite take it in, until you are forced to. When you do, you're faced with an ugly story beautifully told. Do not miss.

Director: David Michôd
Starring: Guy Pearce, Joel Edgerton, James Frecheville
Certificate: 15
Duration: 112 mins
Origin: Australia 2010
By: Optimum Releasing

Amadeus

Opening with The Berkhamsted Choral Society live on stage

Sat 9 6.00

Director: Milos Forman
Starring: Tom Hulce, F Murray Abraham, Elizabeth Berridge, Simon Callow
Certificate: PG
Duration: 188 mins
Origin: USA 1984/2002
By: Warner Brothers

This is Mozart on acid. You probably know the story. It won Oscars twenty seven years ago. By the early 90s it seemed dated, but now as pop clowns have continued to annoy, it has returned to being a timely observation of prodigious teen talent. Not to suggest there is a Rizla of talent among current pop fools.

The obscene X Factor has proven how none is the preferred quality. Mozart was a natural whose music, it has been discovered, follows the natural patterns of human heartbeat and breathing. This makes sense if you consider he was only 12 something when he was dreaming up vast tunes. What else could he know but the beat of his own body?

His genius was that he could write it down as well as feel and hear it. Ironically his youth was his downfall. He was dead by 35 having had every illness and disease under the known 18th Century sun, including smallpox, pneumonia and typhoid! None stopped his partying.

It was the older and pathologically jealous, Antonio Salieri who would enjoy his downfall and see to it, desperately trying to steal his genius.

Doubtless, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a pain the neck to old jobbing composers vying for Imperial Viennese favour (the pop charts of 1780s). Glorious on our big screen. Come early for the real treat: 6pm.





Director: Joanna Hogg
Starring: Christopher Baker, Kate Fahy, Tom Hiddleston, Andrew Lawson, Lydia Leonard
Certificate: 15
Duration: 115 mins
Origin: UK 2010
By: Artificial Eye

Archipelago

with a welcome return of Joanna Hogg in Q&A after the film

Sun 10 6.00

The intriguing Joanna Hogg returns with the follow up to her much acclaimed debut feature “Unrelated”, for which she came for a Q&A when we showed it in November 2008.

Patricia’s son Edward (Kate Fahy; Tom Hiddleston) is about to embark on a volunteering trip to Africa. So to see him off she has organised a family holiday to Tresco on the Scilly Isles. They are joined by his sister Cynthia, Rose, their cook, with Edward’s estranged father possibly joining them later. As they walk, cycle, shoot and paint, the fractures of the family unit begin to appear; a fraught tangle of ulterior motives begins to unravel... Hogg’s film is more about tone, evoking and exploring moods, than perhaps a hugely dramatic narrative – it’s restrained, muted, and at times, deeply uncomfortable viewing.

“Hogg is spot-on about a particular strain of English behaviour that recoils at showing feeling, be it pleasure, anger, anything. Demonstrability is regarded somehow as bad manners and a poor show, whereas screaming down the phone, so long as it’s in another room, is not... As a study in strangled English politesse this film has something to say; I only wish its voice carried a little more vigour.”
(Independent)

“Deeply intelligent” (*Guardian*) (research SM) Don’t miss it or the chance to ask Joanna Hogg about family holidays.





Director: Eugène Green
Starring: Leonor Baldaque, Francisco Mozos, Diogo Dória, Ana Moreira
Certificate: tbc
Duration: 127 mins
Origin: Portugal/France 2009
By: O SOM E A FÚRIA



The Portuguese Nun

Mon 11 7.30

Leonor Baldaque is Julie, a French-Portuguese actress. We find her in Lisbon shooting a dramatisation of a 17th century compilation of love letters telling the tale of a nun who fell in love with a French soldier. During the course of the shoot, Julie becomes fascinated by the city. While wandering through its streets, getting to know it, she encounters a real nun in silent prayer every day. Ostensibly, this could just be a film about making a film, but it goes beyond that. It paints Lisbon as an intoxicating environment; surreal, dream-like. Green's intentionally formal style may jar with some, but those who respond positively to any of Baldaque's innumerable close-ups, gazing intently at the audience, will adore the film. Those who don't, won't. It comes as a surprise to learn that this is the first of director Eugène Green's several feature films to receive UK distribution.

"Elegant, eccentric and absolutely captivating, this is simply a gem with serene, almost eerie self-possession in its long, slow takes and stylised, decelerated speech. Come to it with an open mind, and you might well see one of the best films of the year." (*Guardian*) This is from Peter Bradshaw who gave Uncle Boonmee five stars and hated Fair Game! So don't be put off, you might be joyfully surprised. (*research SM*)



My Afternoons with Marguerite

Tue 12 7.30, Wed 13 7.30



This tiny gem is deservedly back by huge demand. Directed by Jean Becker (son of Jacques), "My Afternoons With Marguerite" is a sweet natured, heart-over-head French comedy of manners. Set in a typical small warm French town, Germain (ç Depardieu), a semi-literate, bumbling, fat handyman, strikes up a friendship with ninety-something Marguerite (astonishing, real life nonagenarian, Gisèle Casadesus). Their chance meeting on a park bench sets in motion a whimsical friendship. Marguerite reads Camus to the big man, and slowly sets him on a path of unanticipated redemption.

It's unashamedly cosy, inimitability French, set in a leafy town where the sun always shines. Depardieu's character is a mixture of blustering assurance and low self-esteem, despite having a blonde girlfriend half his age. Such inconsistencies are there for Depardieu to pull off with ease. However, Gisèle is the star; an actress since the 1930s, she is grace and charm personified.

"It's charming, sentimental, well-acted, and any readers' group should make an outing to see it." (*Observer*)

"Nicely acted, feel-good lesson in self-improvement with a portrait of petit bourgeois village life that uses every cliché in the book." (*Independent*) It's close to *Conversations with My Gardener* in the sure knowledge that one of them is in charge, but it's other one. You will love it. Don't miss.

Director: Jean Becker
Starring: Gérard Depardieu, Gisèle Casadesus
Certificate: 15
Duration: 82 mins
Origin: France 2010
By: Picturehouse Entertainment

The Way Back

Thu 14 7.30

Director: Peter Weir
Starring: Colin Farrell, Ed Harris, Jim Sturgess, Saoirse Ronan
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 123 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: E1 Films

Henryk Wieksha was only fourteen in 1939 when he was deported from Poland along with his mother and brother to a Siberian labour camp. He never saw them again.

He escaped. This is for him.

It is Soviet Russia 1941. Sturgess is Janusz, a Pole, cruelly denounced as a spy, and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment in a brutal, frozen gulag. It is here he encounters, amongst others, Valka (Farrell) and the mysterious Mr. Smith (Harris), who together enact a daring escape; a bid for freedom, across the most inhospitable terrain on earth, across the Gobi desert, the Himalayas, to the safety of British India...

The scale of the journey, said to be based on an authentic personal account, is immense. If the film is a little thin when fleshing out its central characters, Weir's mastery of the elements is enthralling.

"Topography is the real subject of *The Way Back*. The landscapes are beautiful enemies. They exact a great toll.

Hypothermia, dehydration, starvation, sandstorms, sun-roasted madness: these are the wages of fearlessness... A journey that feels awful and heroic and unfathomable" (*Telegraph*)

"*The Way Back* is a robustly made picture, heartfelt, well executed with an exhilarating sense of reach and narrative ambition." (*Guardian*) Back only once. Don't miss. (SM)



Fair Game

Fri 15 7.30, Sat 16 7.00



Joseph Wilson was a former US ambassador, famous for having had a defiant, courageous confrontation with Saddam Hussein.

He was invited by the American government to travel to Niger, to determine if that country's government was selling nuclear material to Saddam's Iraq. Wilson went and calmly reported back the answer was No! His findings were disregarded by the White House war-hawks, who went ahead and made the "Niger" claim in support of waging war.

Infuriated, Wilson published an article in the New York Times, outing himself as the government's informant, but denouncing their perversion of his findings.

To hit back, the vice-president's chief of staff Scooter Libby, revealed that Wilson's wife just happened to be a CIA operative, Valerie Plame. Libby had decided Valerie was "fair game", and coolly blew her cover. "But we really do have to sit through an awful lot of redundant domestic drama." (*Guardian*)

"Fair Game is a drama, impelled by a strong and undoubtedly merited sense of outrage." (*Telegraph*)

"The film is split into two chapters via the West Wing: the first an urgent political thriller, as the pair take on their dangerous fact-finding missions. Then through the West Wingesque into the second, a bleary-eyed melodrama charting family breakdown they are each manipulated by the White House. (*Time Out*) It might be a worthy tale. Come and see.

Director: Doug Liman
Starring: Naomi Watts, Sean Penn, Sonya Davison, Michael Kelly, Ty Burrell
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 104 mins
Origin: USA/UAE 2010
By: Entertainment One

Beuna Vista Social Club

Club Sun 17 6.00

Director: Wim Wenders
Starring: Ry Cooder, Joaquim Cooder, Ibrahim Ferrer, Ruben Gonzalis, Eliades Ochoa, Omara Portuondo, Compay Segundo
Certificate: U
Duration: 105 mins
Origin: Cuba, Germany 1999
By: Pathe Distribution

This is a stunningly beautiful film. There is no cinematography to speak of, and the documentary style is hardly a style.

It is the story of old men and women, denied the chance to make music for most of their young lives. The beauty is in their faces, their humility and their playing...

And they hadn't forgotten a note.

Why do Communists, Taleban, Fascists and all extreme twat regimes ban music and expression as a matter of course? The answer is simple I suppose, but spirit transcends all bullying. This film captures that spirit.

A group of ageing, legendary Cuban musicians, some in their nineties, whose talents had been virtually forgotten following Castro's coup in 1959, are brought out of retirement by Ry Cooder, who travelled to Havana to bring them together, resulting in triumphant performances of extraordinary music, and resurrecting the musicians' careers.

In their very late years they are suddenly touring the globe as stars, thanks to Ry Cooder's remarkably optimistic journey into the unknown.

It is a true gem, not just for musos but for everybody who cherishes the ideal that lost is not losing.

It has taken us nearly two years to trace this print, itself suppressed by ownership and 'rights'. We tried to buy the rights but didn't try hard enough. Never mind, we've found it. Cancel everything to see it.



Route Irish

Mon 18 7.30



“Route Irish” is the colloquial name for Baghdad Airport Road. It is perhaps the most dangerous road in the world, and lends its name to this thriller directed by Ken Loach.

The film tells the story of Fergus (Mark Womack) and Frankie (John Bishop) two close friends, both ex-SAS men, who were employed by a private security firm in Iraq, keen to exploit the high-paid, high-risk work that accompanied the Allied forces invasion. When Frankie is killed on Route Irish, Fergus rejects the official explanation, and attempts to uncover those who wanted him silenced... Unusually for Loach, whilst laden with political undertones, and a fervent condemnation for the violent behaviour of security contractors in the Middle East, the film is a straight up thriller – the intrigue and thuggish violence not necessarily being hallmarks of Loach’s direction.

“Route Irish is an effective thriller but, for once, Loach risks fudging the message that he is trying to deliver.” (*Independent*)

“With a trauma-stricken cast of characters, Loach is essentially bringing the War In Iraq home. But it’s an indifferently-acted thriller too many of whose scenes involve characters on Skype to truly thrill (*Telegraph*) (*Simon Messenger*) It doesn’t matter about the chatter, Ken Loach has never made a bad film. So come for him. Though the casting of John Bishop is a bit hit & miss.

Director: Ken Loach
Starring: John Bishop, Andrea Lowe, Mark Womack
Certificate: 15
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: France, UK 2010
By: Artificial Eye

The Fighter

Tue 19 7.30

Director: David O Russell
Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Melissa Leo
Certificate: 15
Duration: 116 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Paramount International Pictures

Based on a true story, Whalberg plays ‘Irish’ Mickey Ward, a welterweight slugger from Lowell Massachusetts, whose rough road to sporting stardom in the mid 1990’s is both helped and hindered by his ex-boxer brother and crack addict trainer, Dicky (Bale) and his maniacal harridan of a mother, Alice (Oscar winner, Leo) unfortunately also his manager.

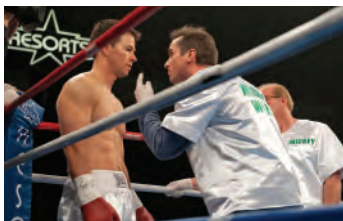
Micky dreams of becoming a champion. He hasn’t got very far. The reasons aren’t hard to pin down.

Ironically, Mickey himself is a bit of a softie. He’d do almost anything to keep his family happy, even at his own expense. It takes a new girlfriend, tough-talking barmaid Charlene (Amy Adams), for him to think again.

“The Fighter looks at first as if it is going to be far more interesting than the straightforward and even rather undemanding drama we finally get. Despite all those Oscar nominations, and awards-season excitement, it is no more than the sum of its parts, and actually has a TV-movie feel.” (*Guardian*)

“The most notable thing about it is its extreme, and at times, off putting diversity of acting styles but it’s still a hugely entertaining tale of rags-to-slightly-better-rags.” (*Time Out*)

“Christian Bale blows Mark Whalberg away in their scenes together” (*Front Row*) Acting at its grandstanding ugliest. Luckily Whalberg’s Mickey is the quiet backbone of the film.



Loose Cannons

Wed 20 7.30



As the director of films like ‘Hamam’, ‘Facing Window’ and ‘A Perfect Day’, Ferzan Ozpetek has established a track record of nuanced comic dramas about contemporary European characters negotiating points of transition and uncertainty in their

lives. In his latest multistranded comedy of errors and sexual identity, the focus is on Tomasso (Riccardo Scamarcio), son of a pasta-making Puglian clan, whose plans to come out to his traditional family are derailed when his older brother steals his thunder. ‘Loose Cannons’ looks sideways to Tomasso’s siblings, friends and acquaintances and back to his grandmother’s early life, exploring a range of dilemmas with humour and sensitivity as its dozen-odd characters try to find their own ways of weighing social propriety and family obligation against self-fulfilment – a balancing act made trickier for Tomasso when his boyfriend and mates arrive from Rome.

“The feel is somewhat cloistered and the pace rarely gets the pulse racing but this is engaging and affecting stuff, handsomely shot and well acted: Ilaria Occhini steals the show as the not so straight-laced grandmother.” (*Time Out*) If you loved the whimsical *Mid August Lunch* and *The First Day of the Rest of Your Life*, you’ll relish this. So don’t miss.

Director: Ferzan Ozpetek
Starring: Alessandro Preziosi, Ennio Fantastichini, Nicole Grimaudo, Riccardo Scamarcio, Riccardo Scamarcio
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: Italy 2010
By: Peccadillo Pictures

Black Swan

Thu 21 7.30

Director: Darren Aronofsky
Starring: Vincent Cassel, Winona Ryder, Natalie Portman, Mila Kunis
Certificate: 15
Duration: 108 mins
Origin: USA 2011
By: Twentieth Century Fox

A film so uniquely magnificent is equally opposite. Darren Aronofsky’s darkly erotic psycho-drama has Natalie Portman, bending and contorting her way to perfection as Nina, a delicate, overly mothered dancer with the New York City Ballet who climbs inside herself to swallow Swan Lake’s dual roles of white and black swans.

Mentored and bullied by a predatory Vincent Cassel, her passion to succeed is fused with a longing to please him. He believes she almost has what it takes to play the white swan but lacks the will to let go and give herself to the seduction of black and white.

It’s not long before she befriends rival dancer Lily (Kunis). Less experienced yet naturally fluid; confident and dangerously flirtatious, Lily is the free-spirited Yin to Nina’s paranoid Yang. She exposes Nina’s wild side but in doing so only fuels her increasingly fractured demeanour. On one hand you’ve got a tense, quasi-realistic drama with documentary composition. Then, like the black swan itself, its darker side unravels and the cracks begin to show. As Nina loses grip, the film itself takes a grip of shocks and surprises. “Realism barely gets a look in this strange tortuous and savagely bitchy balletic world” (*Times*)

It has polarised our audience, and left those in the middle wondering ‘What?’ It must be seen (and heard) on the big screen.



The Adjustment Bureau

Fri 22 7.30, Sat 23 7.00



“Do we have free will or is our fate controlled by supernatural G-men in raincoats and pork-pie hats?”
(*Independent*)

Matt Damon flexes his Bourne muscles as David Norris, a New York ‘bad boy’ politician who isn’t seen in the best public light. The turning point is when, by chance, he meets Elise (Blunt). However, before they can head off into the nearest sunset, these budding young lovers are soon intertwined in a grand scheme to keep them apart in order to prevent a world-wide catastrophe!

“The themes of screenwriter George Nolfi’s first feature film as director will delight philosophers. Does free will exist? Where does chance end and design begin? Can we fight fate?” (*Empire*)

George Nolfi, who worked with Damon writing *The Bourne Ultimatum*, is making his debut here as director. Aesthetically speaking he’s not exactly Christopher Nolan but the chase sequences are steady and show good clarity.

“The film’s conceit assumes that the infinite possibilities of human experience can be manipulated to achieve a single purpose, and as such it leaves numerous plot holes in its wake, but the sweet chemistry between Damon and Blunt does at least make credible their romantic (if existence-threatening) love-knot” (*Time Out*) It’s *Inception*-esque but with heart to accompany the conundrum. (*research Jack Whiting*)

Director: George Nolfi
Starring: Matt Damon, Emily Blunt, John Slattery, Terence Stamp
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 106 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Universal

The Tempest

Sun 24 6.00

Director: Julie Taymor
Starring: Alan Cumming, Ben Whishaw, Helen Mirren, Djimon Hounsou, Felicity Jones
Certificate: PG
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Walt Disney Studio INTL

The beauty about *Shakerags* on film, is you can do what you like with it. And close-ups allow his text the subtly it never gets from live actors prancing, spitting and heavy-breathing with exhausting meaning and grandeur. Film (or CGI) also allows, his sprites to fly and real fire to burst into life, and real fantasy shipwreck comes with splintered decks and the din of waves and gales. So come for all that.

As for the director, I am reminded she thought that Beatles folly *Across the Universe* was a good idea. So expect gimmicks; Dame Helen being the first, followed by chocolate box CGI. “But Taymor’s *Tempest* is all indulgences, slashing the text down into a series of limply connected Benny Hill routines, and coming off like an Eighties prog-rock video. What she’s going for in *The Tempest* is perfectly laudable on paper. In practice, it makes you shudder and want to hide.” (*Telegraph*)

“A forceful and commanding lead performance from Helen Mirren anchors Julie Taymor’s otherwise literal-minded adaptation.” (*Guardian*) or “It direly needs Mirren to take charge and tell us what we’re meant to be doing here, but her performance falls back on default regal authority.” (*Telegraph*) Brand’s Trinculo proves he can only be Brand, and the rest wear zips. Great to look at though. (*Shakerags* comes from *Kemps Jig*)





Alberto Granado

Director: Walter Salles
Starring: Gael Garcia Bernal, Rodrigo De la Serna
Certificate: 15
Duration: 126 mins
Origin: Argentina, UK 2004
By: Pathe Distribution



The Motorcycle Diaries Mon 25 7.30

For Alberto... "This is not a tale of heroic feats... It is about two lives running parallel for a while..."

A beautiful, moving and heart-lifting true story with beautifully understated comic moments.

I defy you not to fall in love with Alberto. Gael Garcia Bernal's Ernesto 'Che' is beautiful, passionate and as earnest as his name but it is Rodrigo De La Serna's Alberto who will steal your heart.

It tells a true story of their journey in 1951 from Argentina to Peru on an old 600cc Norton "The Mighty One" and how it changed their lives... and consequently the rest of the world. Not only unmissable but worth not missing again... and again. This remarkable piece of world cinema has had its own momentum. It was one of our first films on re-opening of the Rex in Dec 2004. It went on to be screened every month for two years, finally closing in April 2006. Every show sold out - all by word of mouth; and was still selling out when we withdrew it. It was time to give new titles a chance. Over 9,000 people have seen it here at The Rex.

We boasted the impossible, to run it until everybody had seen it! Never mind. Now that a few more can, here it is five years later back for one more ride. This time you're riding for the real Alberto Granado (who you see at the end watching the aeroplane take off). He died in Cuba on 5th March aged 88. It will be a long ride till the next time, so don't dare miss it now.

Fair Game

Tue 26 7.30



Joseph Wilson was a former US ambassador, famous for having had a defiant, courageous confrontation with Saddam Hussein.

He was invited by the American government to travel to Niger, to determine if that country's government was selling nuclear material to Saddam's Iraq. Wilson went and calmly reported back the answer was No! His findings were disregarded by the White House war-hawks, who went ahead and made the "Niger" claim in support of waging war.

Infuriated, Wilson published an article in the New York Times, outing himself as the government's informant, but denouncing their perversion of his findings.

To hit back, the vice-president's chief of staff Scooter Libby, revealed that Wilson's wife just happened to be a CIA operative, Valerie Plame. Libby had decided Valerie was "fair game", and coolly blew her cover.

"But we really do have to sit through an awful lot of redundant domestic drama." (*Guardian*)

"Fair Game is a drama, impelled by a strong and undoubtedly merited sense of outrage." (*Telegraph*)

"The film is split into two chapters via the West Wing: the first an urgent political thriller, as the pair take on their dangerous fact-finding missions. Then through the West Wingesque into the second, a bleary-eyed melodrama charting family breakdown they are each manipulated by the White House. (*Time Out*) It might be a worthy tale. Come and see.

Director: Doug Liman
Starring: Naomi Watts, Sean Penn, Sonya Davison, Michael Kelly, Ty Burrell
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 104 mins
Origin: USA/UAE 2010
By: Entertainment One

Unknown

Wed 27 7.30

Director: Jaume Collet-Serra
Starring: Liam Neeson, January Jones, Diane Kruger, Frank Langella
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 113 mins
Origin: USA 2011
By: Optimum Releasing

Since 2008's surprise hit Taken, Liam Neeson has earned himself a bit of a badass reputation. And he continues his European tour with *Unknown*, a perplexing thriller Luc Besson would happily slap his name over. Dr Martin Harris (Neeson) is an American scientist in Berlin, who, after emerging from a car crash, loses his identity. Suddenly no one, not even his wife, recognises him. On top of this, there are shady assassins hot on his heels. Why is nobody recognising him? Who was the mysterious taxi driver? Why is Liam Neeson so shouty?

"So far, so intriguing. But Jaume Collet-Serra's film fumbles Harris' mounting paranoia, preferring to shoehorn in every conceivable thriller cliché as he trudges snowy Berlin attempting to unlock the puzzle." (*Total Film*)

Unknown knowingly cobbles together parts of other amnesia themed thrillers such as Polanski's *Frantic* or the Bourne series but has neither the gravitas nor the trepidation to successfully pull it off. But hey, it's Liam Neeson! And he does his astute best at masking the absurd impossibilities. Throw in fancy car chases, a scene chewing turn from Bruno Ganz (*Downfall*'s Hitler) and you've got yourself a neat, if flawed, little pot-boiler. (*review Jack Whiting*)



Howl

Thu 28 7.30



Sharing its title with the 1955 'beat' poem of the same name, "Howl", is a strange, fragmented, re-imagining of beat poet Allen Ginsberg's (James Franco) rise to recognition.

Told in a jumpy, non-linear manner, "Howl", explores Ginsberg's early life, the first public performance of the notorious poem, and the ensuing obscenity trial. These sequences are inter-cut with animations created by one-time Ginsberg collaborator, Eric Drooker, who fleshes out the poet's distinctive verse. James Franco, currently studying for a PhD in literature, and hardly off our screens, is excellent as Ginsberg. He is restrained, saving any passion for when it's needed. Whilst the film does not entirely do Ginsberg's life justice, we still await a true 'biopic', there is enough here to stimulate fans and non-fans of beat poetry alike.

"There's no denying that this is a bold, inspiring piece of work, putting experimental techniques in the service of a heartfelt, insightful and surprisingly audience-friendly work of art." (*Time Out*)

"Every frame of this ambitious and sometimes fascinating film is visually striking. But it feels too celebratory, too triumphant: it captures Howl's joy, but not enough of its terrors." (*Telegraph*). (research Simon Messenger) If you fancy it, it's mercifully short

Directors: Rob Epstein, Jeffrey Friedman
Starring: James Franco, Jon Hamm, Mary-Louise Parker, Jeff Daniels, David Strathairn
Certificate: 15
Duration: 84 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Soda Pictures

Grease Sing-a-Long

Fri 29 7.30

Director: Randal Kleiser
Starring: John Travolta, Olivia Newton-John
Certificate: PG
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: USA 1978
By: Paramount International Pictures

There's no need to tell you the story, so this will do for first-timers...

Good girl Sandy and greaser Danny fell in love one summer. But when term begins, they discover they're at the same high school. Will they be able to rekindle their Summer Lovin'? Never mind. This singalong gem is full of new surprises.

Truly groovy graphics bring all the big routines to new life. Unlike the lackluster lyric-dots of the coitus neutered (and interrupted) Mamma Mia singalong, they've done a fabulous job on the all the accompanying 'ooh be do wahs' as well as the pizzazz screen jumping lyrics.

Good girl and greaser – what better way to end a Royal wedding day...? Come for the knees up. You've got the rest of the evening to go bopping and the whole long bank holiday weekend to get over it or razz till you drop. The party starts here at The Rex. Don't miss.





Director: Woody Allen
Starring: Anthony Hopkins, Naomi Watts, Josh Brolin, Antonio Banderas, Pauline Collins, Gemma Jones, Lucy Punch
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 98 mins
Origin: USA/Spain 2010
By: Warner Brothers



You Will Meet A Tall Dark Stranger

Sat 30 7.00

Woody Allen fourth film set in London is bitter comedy-drama, featuring an impressive ensemble cast.

Alfie and Helena (Anthony Hopkins; Gemma Jones) and their daughter Sally and husband Ray (Naomi Watts; Josh Brolin) are two couples for whom things are about to go very, very wrong. Alfie's late onset male-menopause is instilling him with a desire to date younger women, whilst Sally and Ray's marriage is disintegrating, as they begin to find a mutual interest in other people...

Anthony Hopkins is good as an aging, Viagra-popping, lothario, and so too is Lucy Punch, as his strumpet girlfriend. It's a reasonably well written affair, with several particularly biting one liners, however, once again, Allen is left grasping for a complete mastery of British-English, showcasing some excruciatingly American-sounding dialogue.

"There's plenty of ambiguous intellectual heft lurking behind the curtain of mediocrity – so it's a pity it feels like it was dashed off in a few hours one afternoon." (*Time Out*)

"Again, this is not the longed-for comeback masterpiece. Perhaps Allen is too far out of time ever to give us that. But it's interesting and worthwhile, with creative vitamins that are absent in so much of what fills the cinemas." (*Guardian*) (*Simon Messenger*)

It's not Vicky, Cristina, Barcelona, but worth a look all the same.

COMING SOON

New releases

The Last Picture Show
Submarine
Essential Killing
Norwegian Wood
Your Highness

Back by demand

Animal Kingdom
The Secret in their Eyes
Welcome to the Sticks
Black Swan
Tall Dark Stranger



Source Code



Oranges and Sunshine



Little White Lies



Benda Bilili

APRIL FILMS AT A GLANCE

Please check times carefully and watch out for early shows.

1	Fri	TRUE GRIT	7.30
2	Sat	GNOMEO AND JULIET	2.00
2	Sat	PAUL	7.00
3	Sun	THE KING'S SPEECH	6.00
4	Mon	THE KING'S SPEECH	2.00
4	Mon	INSIDE JOB	7.30
5	Tue	INSIDE JOB	12.30
5	Tue	THE KING'S SPEECH	7.30
6	Wed	TRUE GRIT	2.00
6	Wed	TRUE GRIT	7.30
7	Thu	ANIMAL KINGDOM	2.00, 7.30
8	Fri	ANIMAL KINGDOM	7.30
9	Sat	JUSTIN BIEBER: NEVER SAY NEVER	2.00
9	Sat	AMADEUS	6.00
10	Sun	ARCHIPELAGO. Q&A with director	6.00
11	Mon	THE RAILWAY CHILDREN	2.00
11	Mon	THE PORTUGUESE NUN	7.30
12	Tue	RANGO	12.30
12	Tue	MY AFTERNOONS WITH MARGUERITE	7.30
13	Wed	MY AFTERNOONS WITH MARGUERITE	2.00, 7.30
14	Thu	THE WAY BACK	2.00, 7.30
15	Fri	FAIR GAME	7.30
16	Sat	RANGO	2.00
16	Sat	FAIR GAME	7.00
17	Sun	BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB	6.00
18	Mon	RANGO	2.00
18	Mon	ROUTE IRISH	7.30
19	Tue	TANGLED	12.30
19	Tue	THE FIGHTER	7.30
20	Wed	LOOSE CANNONS	2.00, 7.30
21	Thu	TANGLED	2.00
21	Thu	BLACK SWAN	7.30
22	Fri	THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU	7.30
23	Sat	GNOMEO & JULIET	2.00
23	Sat	THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU	7.00
24	Sun	THE TEMPEST	6.00
25	Mon	MOTORCYCLE DIARIES	7.30
26	Tue	FAIR GAME	12.30, 7.30
27	Wed	UNKNOWN	2.00, 7.30
28	Thu	THE KING'S SPEECH	2.00
28	Thu	HOWL	7.30
29	Fri	GREASE – SING-ALONG	7.30
30	Sat	A TURTLE'S TALE	2.00
30	Sat	YOU WILL MEET A TALL DARKSTRANGER	7.00



A P R I L M A T I N E E S

ALL MATINEES: Balcony £5.00 • Table seats £6.50 • Royal Box seats £10.00
Matinee Warning: May contain babies

Gnomeo and Juliet

Sat 2 2.00



Gnomeo (McAvoy) and Juliet (Blunt) have as many obstacles to overcome as their quasi namesakes when they are caught up in a feud between neighbours. But with plastic pink flamingos and lawnmower races in the mix, can these two find lasting happiness?

A very loose reading of the Bard's tragic tale, with garden gnomes and Elton John's schmaltzy soundtrack. What can go wrong? "Kelly Asbury's plucky little film is an easy target but even if it doesn't quite gel, it's admirable that a film made of such weird ingredients is even vaguely palatable." (*Time Out*) Yeah yeah yawn.

An Elton John and David Furnish vanity production (now they have child(ren), of course it's only natural to make a film for the little buggers). Blue and red Montague and Capulet gnomes fight it out in the adjoining gardens of a London suburban terrace. Casting ranges from Jason Statham as Tybalt (what???) to Patrick Stewart as Shakespeare (in his case a statue). "Much thought, love and hard work (on the part of the animators) has gone into this. It even has a happy ending, though what Shakespeare himself sees, to his evident pleasure, is an atomic mushroom in the far distance."

(*Guardian*) but soft, what tripe but fun from yonder window breaks?

Director: Kelly Asbury
Voices: James McAvoy, Emily Blunt, Jason Statham, Michael Caine, Maggie Smith, Julie Walters.
Certificate: U
Duration: 84 mins
Origin: UK/USA 2011
By: Entertainment One UK

The King's Speech

Mon 4 2.00

Director: Tom Hooper
Starring: Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush, Helena Bonham Carter, Michael Gambon
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 111 mins
Origin: Australia, UK 2010
By: Momentum Pictures

Hyped to the royal hilt, yet for once it not only doesn't get in the way, the film, performances and screenplay transcend the circus.

It opens with a moment of sheer terror for any stutterer. The then Prince Albert, the Duke of York, second in line to the throne, attempts to make his first mass public speech at Wembley stadium to close the 1925 British Empire Exhibition. It is also a first to be broadcast across the Empire through the new fangled miracle of radio.

Given that the family job is talking, a stammer is not the best of gifts.

The Duchess, Elizabeth tires of conventional 'wisdom', so discovers the unorthodox treatment of Australian speech therapist Lionel Logue.

The shy, diffident 'Bertie' could afford to play the royal brother in the shadows while his popular, but flawed, brother David (Edward VIII) remained King. But with Edward's abdication and a war looming, he would have to become George VI with an urgent need to address his people fluently.

It is a beautiful study in the subtle, shifting balance of power and respect. So too, as both a piece of lost history and a great screenplay, it is a beautifully written, beautifully staged conversation between two people whose evolution into trusted friendship, is exquisitely drawn by actors whose restraint shows no signs of acting. Perfect.



Inside Job Tue 5 12.30



Big shot creep, Hank Paulson says. “If you’re growing, you’re NOT in recession ... right?” Paulson’s shrugging remark sums up the attitude of super-rich bankers and their eager and hopeful small-fry to big shot political supporters.

Charles Ferguson’s documentary about the great financial crash lays out an awful story. In the 1980s, the markets and financial services were deregulated (ie they could promise anything to anyone, and did). The good times rolled. The banks ballooned. Chillingly, the banks now had a vested interest in selling insanely risky products, as they themselves were lavishly insured with rizla safe ‘guarantees’. Perhaps the most sensational aspect is Ferguson’s contention that the crash corrupted the discipline of economics itself. He speaks to many of these economists, who clearly thought they were going to be interviewed as wry, dispassionate observers. It is really something to see the expression of shock, outrage and fear on their faces as they realise they’re in the dock. One splutters with vexation; another gives vent to a ripe Freudian slip. Asked about his behaviour and any regrets: “I have no comments ... uh, no regrets.” There is a revolving door between the banks and the higher reaches of government, and surprisingly the groves of University academic advisors. Bank CEOs become government officials, creating laws convenient for their games. (research Guardian – well it would be wouldn’t it?)

“As gripping as any thriller. Ferguson knows how to break down a subject to make fresh sense, to corner those running for cover with killer questions.” (*Telegraph*) This is vital film making. Drop broken dreams to come.

Director: Charles Ferguson
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 109 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Sony

True Grit Wed 6 2.00

Director: Coen Brothers
Starring: Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon, Hailee Steinfeld, Josh Brolin
Certificate: 15
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: USA 2011
By: Paramount International Pictures

The deservedly Oscar nominated, Hailee Steinfeld plays a plucky young girl who hires an ageing US Marshall to avenge the death of her father.

Bridges plays that Marshall: the nearly incomprehensible Rooster Cogburn. His mumbling doesn’t matter. It’s her lines that tell the story, but it’s Jeff’s face that defines the Wild West in all that we’ve ever expected it to be.

Ethan Cohen admitted: “We were aware if the kid doesn’t work, there’s no movie.” They got her right. The kid works in screen-loads.

The Presbyterian/puritanical language of the time wins on every level. It’s brilliant delivery by all, uses the full expression, energy and inflection to fill the place of happily absent four-letter words.

The cowboys are gritty and dirty and spit as they articulate through bad teeth.

They are as unwashed as Roger Deakins’ lens, captures beautifully, the washed out landscape of leafless trees and cold, grey scrubland.

Watch out for Barry Pepper as Lucky Ned Pepper and see if you can count how many times you’ve seen him as the out and out baddy or menacing psycho cop. The disappointment, often the sin of the Coens, comes at the end. While the faces are brilliant, the film is not worth all the noise, though not to be missed either.



Animal Kingdom

Thu 7 2.00



A very big thank you to Optimum for letting us preview this in celebration of the Rex' sixth anniversary in December, and so far ahead of general release in March 2011.

Much of the fascination with The Godfather and yarns of similar ambition derives from a conflict of loyalty: Is it better to do what's right, or is it more 'right' to stand by family no matter what? "This extraordinary Australian drama has the novel idea to explore this dilemma through a character with no personality whatsoever. As it turns out, no personality goes a long way." (*Time Out*)

Our hero is mainly a fly on the wall, more interested in not doing much, getting high and mucking around with an equally disaffected girlfriend than he is in his uncles' affairs. There are wierd twists in this slow burning thriller. Guy Pearce is always a great presence, though his fame blunts its authentic spike.

At first it feels like a tale about unfamiliar and ordinary faces, which explodes unexpectedly and doesn't stop exploding. The family is grubby, the setting low-life. Its authentic filming seems two dimensional a bit like 'Neighbours' (without a Kylie or Jason in sight) where you don't quite take it in, until you are forced to. When you do, you're faced with an ugly story beautifully told. Do not miss.

Director: David Michôd
Starring: Guy Pearce, Joel Edgerton, James Frecheville
Certificate: 15
Duration: 112 mins
Origin: Australia 2010
By: Optimum Releasing

Justin Bieber: Never Say Never

Sat 9 2.00

Director: Jon Chu
Certificate: U
Duration: 105 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Paramount

"Justin Bieber: Never Say Never" carries the hyperbolic tag-line "Find out what's possible if you never give up". At 17 years old, it's hard to work out what this refers to; his recent puberty?

Justin Bieber is a hugely successful teen idol. His most obsessive fans, or "Beliebers", have been known to cause riots outside the hotels where he's staying, in scenes reminiscent of Beatlemania at its most manic.

The film will presumably satiate the most hardcore of these fans. It's essentially a record of his 2010 world tour, and the climactic concert at Madison Square Garden, punctuated by some home-movies, and a perfunctory message of believing in oneself.

However, Bieber's rise to stardom is fascinating. He is the first global superstar to be propelled to such heights using online social networking, in particular, YouTube.

Mock the Bieber phenomenon by all means, but the terrifying wisdom of the crowd, plucking a small Canadian boy from nowhere and catapulting him to global superstardom, is something to behold.

"I defy anyone to watch this docu-lite promotional tour video about Justin Bieber's live show (back when he was 16) and not be sort of impressed, if only at an anthropological level." (*Guardian*) (research Simon Messenger). This is deliberate teen exploitation, not the movie, but playing for a Rex kids Saturday matinee. Four yr olds and grown-ups beware.



The Railway Children

Mon 11 2.00



A rare treat for the whole family in this or any school holidays.

It perfectly captures the English landscape at a time when children waved at steam trains. It is an innocent tale about innocence, pride and good manners; about hardship, adversity and the once lovely friendships between children and grown-ups. It is a celebration of old-fashioned British fortitude set in an environment of steam engines, buttercups, top hats and smocks. Is it sentimental? Only the hard-hearted could deny the lovability and charm of Lionel Jeffries's tremendous 1970 version of E Nesbit's children's classic *The Railway Children*.

It is a chance to choke back a new tear and give new children the chance to be lost in the simple beauty of the original re-released for the big screen. Being the father of girls, "Daddy ... my daddy!" as the steam clears the platform, is for ever and gladly heartbreaking.

"Putting aside its fusty look and feel, Jeffries's film remains an enjoyable evocation of the time. Of course, whether today's kids get it is open to debate." (*Time Out*)

There are no explosions and nobody gets a thick ear. Bring your grandparents and don't fidget. Who knows, there might even be buns for tea when you get home...?

Director: Lionel Jeffries
Starring: Jenny Agater
Certificate: U
Duration: 109 mins
Origin: UK 1970
By: British Film Institute

Rango

Tue 12 12.30

Director: Gore Verbinski
Voices: Johnny Depp, Isla Fisher, Abigail Breslin, Alfred Molina, Bill Nighy, Ray Winstone
Certificate: U
Duration: 107 mins
Origin: USA 2011
By: Paramount

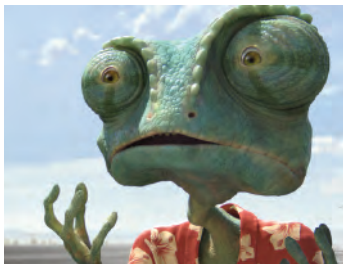
"How does Johnny Depp get away with it? There are few stars, even ultra-A-listers, who could get a family animation as blissfully weird as *Rango* green-lit, let alone injected with its acid-trip spirit. It's hard to know what children will make of it. So just load them with sherbet and see what happens. If they love it, you may have to feed them *Twin Peaks* (better *High Noon*) next." (*Telegraph*)

It is a classic cowboy Western, combining past and present in the story of a lizard as a would-be gunslinger who tangles with nasty baddies.

Depp's pet chameleon Rango, has his world turned upside down by a crash. His tank goes flying, the screen spins, and your jaw fairly drops. Lost in the desert, Rango, a furtive, essentially timid soul who fancies himself an actor, must think fast. He ends up running for sheriff in a dusty backwater called Dirt...

"There are wonderful things here: the dialogue is witty, the animation is dizzying and the action stunningly choreographed. Detail, from Rango's skin to countless in-jokes and references, means it would have worked well as a ripping, family-friendly yarn packed with incident and humour; but tries to be too clever." (*Time Out*) Perhaps.

For real grown ups it is *High Noon*. As for kids, they'll have to keep up. Take the afternoon off.



My Afternoons With Marguerite **Wed 13 2.00**



This tiny gem is deservedly back by huge demand. Directed by Jean Becker (son of Jacques), “My Afternoons With Marguerite” is a sweet natured, heart-over-head French comedy of manners. Set in a typical small warm French town, Germain (ç Depardieu), a semi-literate, bumbling, fat handyman, strikes up a friendship with ninety-something Marguerite (astonishing, real life nonagenarian, Gisèle Casadesus). Their chance meeting on a park bench sets in motion a whimsical friendship. Marguerite reads Camus to the big man, and slowly sets him on a path of unanticipated redemption.

It’s unashamedly cosy, inimitability French, set in a leafy town where the sun always shines. Depardieu’s character is a mixture of blustering assurance and low self-esteem, despite having a blonde girlfriend half his age. Such inconsistencies are there for Depardieu to pull off with ease. However, Gisèle is the star; an actress since the 1930s, she is grace and charm personified.

“It’s charming, sentimental, well-acted, and any readers’ group should make an outing to see it.” (*Observer*)

“Nicely acted, feel-good lesson in self-improvement with a portrait of petit bourgeois village life that uses every cliché in the book.” (*Independent*) It’s close to *Conversations with My Gardener* in the sure knowledge that one of them is in charge, but it’s other one. You will love it. Don’t miss.

Director: Jean Becker
Starring: Gérard Depardieu, Gisèle Casadesus
Certificate: 15
Duration: 82 mins
Origin: France 2010
By: Picturehouse Entertainment

The Way Back **Thu 14 2.00**

Director: Peter Weir
Starring: Colin Farrell, Ed Harris, Jim Sturgess, Saoirse Ronan
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 123 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: E1 Films

Henryk Wieksha was only fourteen in 1939 when he was deported from Poland along with his mother and brother to a Siberian labour camp. He never saw them again.

He escaped. This is for him.

It is Soviet Russia 1941. Sturgess is Janusz, a Pole, cruelly denounced as a spy, and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment in a brutal, frozen gulag. It is here he encounters, amongst others, Valka (Farrell) and the mysterious Mr. Smith (Harris), who together enact a daring escape; a bid for freedom, across the most inhospitable terrain on earth, across the Gobi desert, the Himalayas, to the safety of British India...

The scale of the journey, said to be based on an authentic personal account, is immense. If the film is a little thin when fleshing out its central characters, Weir’s mastery of the elements is enthralling. “Topography is the real subject of *The Way Back*. The landscapes are beautiful enemies. They exact a great toll.

Hypothermia, dehydration, starvation, sandstorms, sun-roasted madness: these are the wages of fearlessness... A journey that feels awful and heroic and unfathomable” (*Telegraph*)

“*The Way Back* is a robustly made picture, heartfelt, well executed with an exhilarating sense of reach and narrative ambition.” (*Guardian*) Back only once. Don’t miss. (*SM*)



Rango

Sat 16 2.00, Mon 18 2.00



“How does Johnny Depp get away with it? There are few stars, even ultra-A-listers, who could get a family animation as blissfully weird as Rango green-lit, let alone injected with its acid-trip spirit. It’s hard to know what children will make of it. So just load them with sherbet and see what happens. If they love it, you may have to feed them Twin Peaks (better High Noon) next.” (*Telegraph*)

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For real grown ups it is High Noon. As for kids, they’ll have to keep up. Take the afternoon off.

Director: Gore Verbinski
Voices: Johnny Depp, Isla Fisher, Abigail Breslin, Alfred Molina, Bill Nighy, Ray Winstone
Certificate: PG
Duration: 107 mins
Origin: USA 2011
By: Paramount

Tangled

Tue 19 12.30, Thu 21 2.00

Directors: Byron Howard, Nathan Greno
Starring: Mandy Moore
Certificate: PG
Duration: 100 mins
Origin: USA 2010
By: Walt Disney Studio INTL

“Despite the title, Rapunzel’s hair stays as lustrous and untroubled as something from a shampoo ad; extreme girliness is of course the order of the day” (*Guardian*)

Disney has been leaning a little too hard on Pixar’s shoulders over the last decade or so, but with Tangled, the classic Repunzel tale, as with The Princess and the Frog in 2010, the studio is taking audacious steps to reclaim the torch it once proudly shone. They say the story telling isn’t quite up to Toy Story standards but who cares.

Erstwhile popstrel Mandy Moore voices Rapunzel, whose lonely existence imprisoned in a tall tower with only a cheeky chameleon for company is enlivened when she meets brash outlaw Flynn Rider (Levi), and sets out to discover her true identity.

Tangled adopts a humour palette akin to Shrek; combining fluid and captivating animation (the colossal \$160 million budget helps) with ironic jokes to keep kids mesmerized and adults in on it. thankfully a generous helping of sing-alongs keep everything breezy.

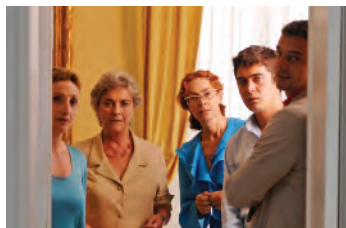
“Hero Flynn is cut-out but Broadway star Donna Murphy’s vain, villainous fake-matriarch is marvelous – catch her rendition of Mother Knows Best.” (*Telegraph*)

It isn’t vintage Disney yet, but in a golden age where Pixar and Dreamworks dominate, it has found a foothold. (*Jack Whiting*) It’s fun. Don’t miss



Loose Cannons

Wed 20 2.00



As the director of films like ‘Hamam’, ‘Facing Window’ and ‘A Perfect Day’, Ferzan Ozpetek has established a track record of nuanced comic dramas about contemporary European characters negotiating points of transition and uncertainty in their lives.

In his latest multistranded comedy of errors and sexual identity, the focus is on Tomasso (Riccardo Scamarcio), son of a pasta-making Puglian clan, whose plans to come out to his traditional family are derailed when his older brother steals his thunder. ‘Loose Cannons’ looks sideways to Tomasso’s siblings, friends and acquaintances and back to his grandmother’s early life, exploring a range of dilemmas with humour and sensitivity as its dozen-odd characters try to find their own ways of weighing social propriety and family obligation against self-fulfilment – a balancing act made trickier for Tomasso when his boyfriend and mates arrive from Rome.

“The feel is somewhat cloistered and the pace rarely gets the pulse racing but this is engaging and affecting stuff, handsomely shot and well acted: Ilaria Occhini steals the show as the not so straight-laced grandmother.” (*Time Out*) If you loved the whimsical *Mid August Lunch* and *The First Day of the Rest of Your Life*, you’ll relish this. So don’t miss.

Director: Ferzan Ozpetek
Starring: Alessandro Preziosi, Ennio Fantastichini, Nicole Grimaudo, Riccardo Scamarcio, Riccardo Scamarcio
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: Italy 2010
By: Peccadillo Pictures

Gnomeo and Juliet

Sat 23 2.00

Director: Kelly Asbury
Voices: James McAvoy, Emily Blunt, Jason Statham, Michael Caine, Maggie Smith, Julie Walters.
Certificate: U
Duration: 84 mins
Origin: UK/USA 2011
By: Entertainment One UK

Gnomeo (McAvoy) and Juliet (Blunt) have as many obstacles to overcome as their quasi namesakes when they are caught up in a feud between neighbours. But with plastic pink flamingos and lawnmower races in the mix, can these two find lasting happiness?

A very loose reading of the Bard’s tragic tale, with garden gnomes and Elton John’s schmaltzy soundtrack. What can go wrong? “Kelly Asbury’s plucky little film is an easy target but even if it doesn’t quite gel, it’s admirable that a film made of such weird ingredients is even vaguely palatable.” (*Time Out*) Yeah yeah yawn.

An Elton John and David Furnish vanity production (now they have child(ren), of course it’s only natural to make a film for the little buggers). Blue and red Montague and Capulet gnomes fight it out in the adjoining gardens of a London suburban terrace. Casting ranges from Jason Statham as Tybalt (what???) to Patrick Stewart as Shakespeare (in his case a statue). “Much thought, love and hard work (on the part of the animators) has gone into this. It even has a happy ending, though what Shakespeare himself sees, to his evident pleasure, is an atomic mushroom in the far distance.” (*Guardian*) but soft, what tripe but fun from yonder window breaks?



Fair Game

Tue 26 12.30



Joseph Wilson was a former US ambassador, famous for having had a defiant, courageous confrontation with Saddam Hussein.

He was invited by the American government to travel to Niger, to determine if that country's government was selling nuclear material to Saddam's Iraq. Wilson went and calmly reported back the answer was No! His findings were disregarded by the White House war-hawks, who went ahead and made the "Niger" claim in support of waging war.

Infuriated, Wilson published an article in the New York Times, outing himself as the government's informant, but denouncing their perversion of his findings.

To hit back, the vice-president's chief of staff Scooter Libby, revealed that Wilson's wife just happened to be a CIA operative, Valerie Plame. Libby had decided Valerie was "fair game", and coolly blew her cover. "But we really do have to sit through an awful lot of redundant domestic drama." (*Guardian*)

"Fair Game is a drama, impelled by a strong and undoubtedly merited sense of outrage." (*Telegraph*)

"The film is split into two chapters via the West Wing: the first an urgent political thriller, as the pair take on their dangerous fact-finding missions. Then through the West Wingesque into the second, a bleary-eyed melodrama charting family breakdown they are each manipulated by the White House. (*Time Out*) It might be a worthy tale. Come and see.

Director: Doug Liman
Starring: Naomi Watts, Sean Penn, Sonya Davison, Michael Kelly, Ty Burrell
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 108 mins
Origin: USA/UAE 2010
By: Entertainment One

Unknown

Wed 27 2.00

Director: Jaume Collet-Serra
Starring: Liam Neeson, January Jones, Diane Kruger, Frank Langella
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 113 mins
Origin: USA 2011
By: Optimum Releasing

Since 2008's surprise hit Taken, Liam Neeson has earned himself a bit of a badass reputation. And he continues his European tour with *Unknown*, a perplexing thriller Luc Besson would happily slap his name over. Dr Martin Harris (Neeson) is an American scientist in Berlin, who, after emerging from a car crash, loses his identity. Suddenly no one, not even his wife, recognises him. On top of this, there are shady assassins hot on his heels. Why is nobody recognising him? Who was the mysterious taxi driver? Why is Liam Neeson so shouty?

"So far, so intriguing. But Jaume Collet-Serra's film fumbles Harris' mounting paranoia, preferring to shoehorn in every conceivable thriller cliché as he trudges snowy Berlin attempting to unlock the puzzle." (*Total Film*)

Unknown knowingly cobbles together parts of other amnesia themed thrillers such as Polanski's *Frantic* or the Bourne series but has neither the gravitas nor the trepidation to successfully pull it off. But hey, it's Liam Neeson! And he does his astute best at masking the absurd impossibilities. Throw in fancy car chases, a scene chewing turn from Bruno Ganz (*Downfall's* Hitler) and you've got yourself a neat, if flawed, little pot-boiler. (*review Jack Whiting*)



The King's Speech

Thu 28 2.00



Hyped to the royal hilt, yet for once it not only doesn't get in the way, the film, performances and screenplay transcend the circus.

It opens with a moment of sheer terror for any stutterer. The then Prince Albert, the Duke of York, second in line to the throne, attempts to make his first mass public speech at Wembley stadium to close the 1925 British Empire Exhibition. It is also a first to be broadcast across the Empire through the new fangled miracle of radio.

Given that the family job is talking, a stammer is not the best of gifts.

The Duchess, Elizabeth tires of conventional 'wisdom', so discovers the unorthodox treatment of Australian speech therapist Lionel Logue.

The shy, diffident 'Bertie' could afford to play the royal brother in the shadows while his popular, but flawed, brother David (Edward VIII) remained King. But with Edward's abdication and a war looming, he would have to become George VI with an urgent need to address his people fluently.

It is a beautiful study in the subtle, shifting balance of power and respect. So too, as both a piece of lost history and a great screenplay, it is a beautifully written, beautifully staged conversation between two people whose evolution into trusted friendship, is exquisitely drawn by actors whose restraint shows no signs of acting. Perfect.

Director: Tom Hooper
Starring: Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush, Helena Bonham Carter, Michael Gambon
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 111 mins
Origin: Australia, UK 2010
By: Momentum Pictures

A Turtle's Tale

Sat 30 2.00

Director: Ben Stassen
Voices: Melanie Griffith, Dominic Cooper, Gemma Arterton
Certificate: U
Duration: 85 mins
Origin: Belgium 2011
By: Optimum Releasing

Directed by Ben Stassen, 'Sammy's Adventures: The Secret Passage' (previously 'Around The World In 50 Years'!) is the life story of a sea turtle, from his birth in 1959 to his adulthood in 2009, featuring the voice of Isabelle Fuhrman, who played little Esther in **Orphan**. As he scrambles to the sea shortly after his birth on a Californian beach, Sammy the sea turtle finds and loses the love of his life, a pretty hatchling called Shelly (Fuhrman). On the epic journey across the oceans that all turtles accomplish before returning to the beach where they were born, Sammy dodges every danger in the hope of meeting Shelly again. With best buddy Ray, he sees close-up how humans are hurting the planet and battles piranhas while looking for a mysterious secret passage that will lead him back to Shelly. "The eco-message is unimpeachable, but that doesn't stop it being as aimless as its hero. With endless shots of underwater landscapes propping up an episodic narrative, this is less Finding Nemo than one long screensaver." (*Tot Film*) What do they know.

Come for a French pussycat, a Scottish seagull and the 'nice' turtle played by Christine Bleakley. With Daybreak she might know what drowning feels like. Little ones will love it, and it's a great way to learn.



ST ALBANS MARKET...



Ally, Karina & Beth share the joys of the The Rex programme – Not set-up!!!



We need to get on with this now. If any three banks were to give us one day's Big Cheeses bonuses, we'd have it finished. Let's make it Tuesday...?

The sun is starting to shine on St Albans market. People have started to notice we're there, and even come and talk to us. We'll be here until everybody knows about the Odyssey or as soon as we have the first £500,000 to begin full restoration, which ever comes sooner... Our stall is on the market square near the Town Hall. Don't miss.

COMMENTS & LETTERS

LOOSE CHANGE...

"Lovely evening – as always. Downstairs bar – can you get the credit card reader problem sorted or perhaps the staff can issue a receipt which we can pay upstairs and return to the downstairs bar. I'm not prepared to "leave my credit card", and you do end up with customers leaving their cards behind don't you? Paul West (11 March).

Yes people do leave their cards behind; and their glasses, scarves, umbrellas, even items of underwear and sometimes, toenail clippings! And yes the card machine can't get a signal downstairs. However, in the 'not prepared to' dept, our simple system will not be changed. All, bar one, embrace it without fuss. Unless you're royalty, carrying money is allowed. Nothing costs too much here. Besides, card transactions are a pain in the bars. We have only 25 minutes busy service time and cards slow things down disproportionately, make queues longer and create justified impatience in those waiting. Personally, standing behind somebody in a pub, paying by card, reminds me that pubs and bars should be all cash. Drinks are a small-ish pocket money item, they're not the weeks shopping or a settee. The broader conspiratorial argument centres on the Authorities' rush to make cash redundant. I try to use it for everything. It keeps it alive and leaves me under no delusion that I can have what I can't pay for. Besides, a beer is an instant item, I don't want to find that I'm still paying for it a month later. Enough, think of the Rex as a night out where you'll need a few bob in your pocket and leave your card at home where you can find it.

PS From now on, no card transactions under £10 at the bar.

Thank you.



MORE BABIES...

We had a very nice letter concerned about babies at Tuesday matinees, in particular during The King's Speech orgy a few weeks ago. Wailing or gurgling infants can get on your nerves especially if they are not yours and/or if you've done all that and your kids have grown up. Most of the audience don't seem to mind. We get very few complaints, but those we do get are very vocal indeed, sometimes matching the pitch of the guilty child. Anyway, the short of it is, we hold a matinee once a week (Tuesdays 12.30) where mothers with new-ish babies have one chance to come and see a current or any film. We invite and encourage them. "A godsend" was how one new mother, and previously weekly visitor to the evening shows, described Tuesdays matinees. Thus they will continue. There are three other matinee days, in the 'godsend' dept, without babies.

BABIES: THE MOVIE...

PS There's a new film out entitled 'Babies'. So beware. They might come on their own in Hells Angels prams wielding nappy pins and looking for trouble

FAREWELL... DAVID WOOLLACOTT



David Woollacott died on Sunday 13th March. There hasn't been much time to think, so a proper tribute will be paid to him in May. For the moment here are some pictures I found. The sepia ones are in his garden at Durrants Lane taken in the summer of 1994/95. I'd gone to interview him for the Berkhamsted & Tring Times. Instead, he invited me to peel a huge bowl of potatoes with him. All the beautifully finished carpentry in the auditorium is his. See it next time you're in. He is already sadly missed.

