

THE-REX

M A G A Z I N E

MR ALUN REES 1931 - 2012
(CHIEF PROJECTIONIST: RET'D)

DECEMBER...

"Unhesitatingly The Rex is the best cinema I have ever seen..."
(Sunday Times 2012)

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

DECEMBER 2012 Issue 93
www.therexberkhamsted.com

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

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INSIDE COVER

FRANKENWEENIE
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Sun	4.30 – 6.30

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Alun Rees Chief projectionist (ret'd)
Jon Waugh Projectionist
Anna Shepherd Projectionist & writer
Martin Coffill Projectionist
Jacquie Rose Chief Admin
Oliver Hicks Best Boy (ret'd)
Simon Messenger Writer
Jack Whiting Writer
Jane Clucas & Lynn Hendry PR/Sales/FoH

Andrew Dixon Resident Artist
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Lynn Hendry Advertising 01442 877999

James Hannaway ceo 01442 877999
Betty Patterson Company Secretary and THE ORIGINAL VISIONARY of The Rex.

The Rex
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 Berkhamsted HP4 2FG
www.therexberkhamsted.com

BEST IN DECEMBER



Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker

The Bolshoi ballet stunning beautiful uplifting
 Thu 27 7.30

FILMS OF THE MONTH



Argo

A thrilling clever ride – and true?
 Fri 14 7.30 / Sat 15 7.00 / Wed 19 7.30
 USA 2012



It's A Wonderful Life

Its not Christmas without George Bailey
 Sun 23 6.00 / Mon 24 5.00. USA 1946



Silver Linings Playbook

Love? Just when you can do without it
 Fri 28 7.30 / Sat 29 7.00. USA 2012

TOBY JONES... 28TH OCTOBER



Our projector is still there guarding the gates, a new colour and a different season since Toby was last here in 2007 for *Infamous*; his remarkable Truman Capote portrayal. In October he came with *The Berberian Sound Studio*, remarkable too in other ways. He was very gracious about the film's young director Peter Strickland, crediting him with making an experimental British film, rather than opting for the socio-realism favoured by many young guns aiming to make it in the gritty dept. Considering the film was somewhat baffling most of the audience' questions/comments were cogent and thoughtful. I didn't get it, or their questions.

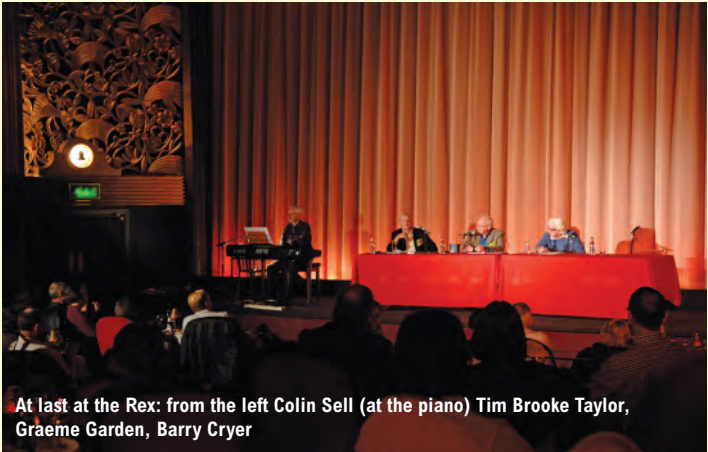
From the moment he walked in, Toby asked how the Rex was doing and caught me off guard with his genuine interest in the *Odyssey* restoration St Albans. He interviewed us for a good hour before we got anywhere near his Q&A. His openness and quiet enthusiasm is infectious from the moment he speaks, with none of the trappings of Actor about him, and very funny. Luckily he was even able to wring humour from my tepid questions, and talked about his extraordinary times on some of the biggest films of the last ten years (*Harry Potter*, *Tinker Tailor, Frost Nixon*, *Hunger Games* etc) as though it was nothing, fearing to say how he is chosen for parts now, rather than auditioning. It's not cricket in these circles to swagger. His next is playing 'old cheeks' himself in *The Girl*, a television drama about Alfred Hitchcock, scheduled for December on the box. A film about Hitch out next year thwarts him again



(*Infamous* & Capote 2006/7) this time it's Anthony Hopkins. Again he is easy to the point of couldn't care less. The perfect guest, forever welcome. Moreover, he has a Rex calendar up in his family kitchen. Beat that for swaggering.



I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T A CLUE... 21ST OCTOBER



At last at the Rex: from the left Colin Sell (at the piano) Tim Brooke Taylor, Graeme Garden, Barry Cryer

This long anticipated event wasn't quite the programme format we love, but we knew that, didn't we? The team: Tim, Barry and Graeme with Colin Sell at the piano, started with a brief history of the show and how Humph was coerced in 1982 as the most unlikely panel game host they could find. They all hated the fledgling shows. Then followed some favourite pieces of nonsense, Mornington Crescent took a volunteer from the floor. She was very thrilled.

We were all fans. They could do no wrong. It would have been nice, I hear, for them to do no wrong a little longer.

If tidied away just when getting into their stride, the audience lapped up what there was with all the enthusiasm of a 2000 seater.

A short but perfectly formed evening in the company of quiet genius.

Mrs Trellis would be proud.

A few from the Uxbridge English Dictionary to send you on your way...

Shire: *a downpour in Gerrards Cross*

Polygamy: *the ancient art of wife-folding*

Nutmeg: *to assault the star of When Harry Met Sally*

Hispanic: *a fear of snakes*

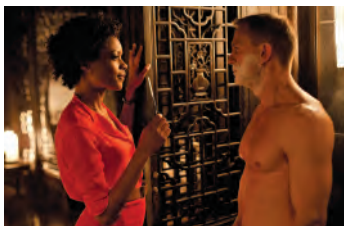
Ps Their charity: ENRYCH raised quite a lot of money too. Well done.



...and again a little closer



D E C E M B E R E V E N I N G S



Director: Sam Mendes
Starring: Daniel Craig, Judi Dench, Javier Bardem, Ralph Fiennes
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 145 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Sony Pictures Releasing

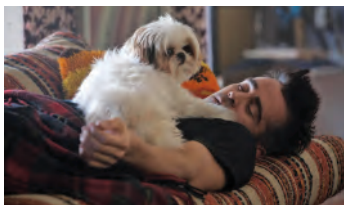
Skyfall

Sat 1 7.00, **Sun 2** 6.00,
Mon 3 7.30, **Tue 4** 7.30,
Thu 6 7.30, **Fri 7** 7.30

James Bond is back, in a suit too tight and a face too straight, apart from that it promises to be a fab film, with even better things going on at the Rex.

We've got it early, didn't expect it till January, so will celebrate it throughout the first week in December. Well done to those who have waited to see it here, or have come to see it again properly in decent Fleming surroundings. It is the first film we've shown for a whole week. Luckily there is a break on Wednesday 5th for our eighth anniversary (Seven Psychopaths – it will be talked about well into next year, and much longer than silly Skyfall). But for the moment, come dressed to kill or come as you are – unstirred.





Director: Martin McDonagh
Starring: Colin Farrell, Woody Harrelson, Sam Rockwell, Christopher Walken
Certificate: 15
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: UK 2012
By: Momentum Pictures



ANNIVERSARY FILM

Seven Psychopaths

Wed 5 7.30

It doesn't matter what it's about. It's Martin MacDonagh. It's going to be swear-y all the time, no doubt violent and disgusting in places with a hairbrained plot and funny all the way through. Not to mention a scrapyard of the most fabulous faces ever brought together on the same screen since Whatever Happened to Baby Jane. But never mind any of that. It is our eight anniversary. The Rex re-opened on 5th December 2004. It is the only reason for coming.

Ps However, it might be worth adding, this is a special preview for our anniversary only. Nobody will see it for another week or two and it will be one of the most talked about films well into next year.

The Master

Sat 8 7.00, Sun 9 6.00



Half a decade since *There Will Be Blood*, Paul Thomas Anderson's latest masterpiece? finally comes ashore.

On leaving the Navy after WWII, Freddie Quell (Phoenix) fails to connect to the Golden Age of American Capitalism. With a cocktail of PTSD and drink, he drifts. Waking up on a fun-party yacht, he meets Lancaster Dodd (Hoffman) the founding leader of 'The Cause'. Uh oh... Said to be only loosely based on L. Ron Hubbard, *The Master* is not meant as an exposé of Scientology? "It is a breath-taking, singular, technically audacious film, white hot with emotion, boasting scenes so powerful they'll stay with you for days" (*Total Film*)

Certainly worthwhile for the greatness of Hoffman and Phoenix's performances.

(*Anna Shepherd*) OR

"It has a self conscious swagger. The kind of film made to win Oscars... There's a feeling that they are always acting and seemed to be acting in separate rooms" (*BBC R4 Front Row*)

"Critics have said you seem to be making it up as you go along" (*Francine Stock*). Anderson (angry) "What else you going to do? We make everything up as we go along... You're making your questions up as you go along I'm making up the answers as I go along..." (*Film Prog BBC R4*) Learn from The Coens - schoolboy. I hated *There will be Blood* too. Ps *The Master* is two hours too long too.

Director: Paul Thomas Anderson
Starring: Joaquin Phoenix, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams
Certificate: 15
Duration: 144 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Entertainment Film Distributors

Beasts Of The Southern Wild

Mon 10 7.30, Tue 11 7.30

Director: Benh Zeitlin
Starring: Quvenzhané Wallis, Dwight Henry
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 93 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Studiocanal

"The best feel-good movie of the year" is a tagline usually to be mistrusted. It conjures images of embarrassing sing a longs (take a bow *Mama Mia!* And the silly closing scene of *Slumdog Millionaire*). Thankfully Benh Zeitlin's cracking debut draws a whole range of 'good' emotions.

"The film follows a fiercely independent six-year-old, Hushpuppy (Quvenzhané Wallis), who is trying to make her way in a bayou community dubbed 'the Bathtub'. Hushpuppy is not your average child. She cooks for herself, takes care of her animals and freely roams the swampy land she calls home. Her terminally ill alcoholic father is raising her to be as self-sufficient as possible, knowing that he may not be around to take care of her for long.

A powerful film about a tiny girl trying as best as she can to adapt to love, loss and abandonment amidst her huge ever-changing, unforgiving world.

"It creates a world to get lost in, a world of beauty, terror and mythic wonder. Zeitlin said he wanted to merge the poetics of an art film with something that feels like *Die Hard*." (*Rolling Stone*). Well he did, and it combines those elements beautifully. Don't hesitate. It's got Best Picture written all over it. (*JW*) Raw in places, but a definite don't miss for the whole family (whatever the certificate says).





Director: Wayne Blair
Starring: Chris O'Dowd, Deborah Mailman, Jessica Mauboy, Miranda Tapsell
Certificate: PG
Duration: 103 mins
Origin: Australia 2012
By: Entertainment One UK



The Sapphires

Wed 12 7.30, Thu 13 7.30

Directed by Wayne Blair and based on Tony Briggs' play, The Sapphires is a warm, soulful Australian comedy drama – and true...

Australia, 1968. Four indigenous young women, Gail (Deborah Mailman), Julie (Jessica Mauboy), Kay (Shari Sebbens) and Cynthia (Miranda Tapsell), play country and western gigs to small, disinterested white audiences in crappy outback bars. Seemingly going nowhere, the four encounter a boozy Irish talent scout Dave Lovelace (Chris O'Dowd) who, sensing their natural talents, offers to manage them and suggests they change their style to an all-girl soul group. With some encouragement the transition is a success, and before long Dave reveals he's booked them a gig abroad; a morale-boosting mission to perform for the troops in Saigon...

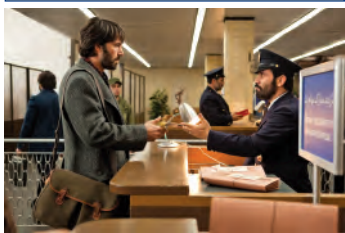
It's an utterly charming, feel-good film; fantastic music, hilarious in parts and, after a series of Hollywood bit parts, an excellent vehicle for the eloquent comic talents of Chris O'Dowd.

"Based, incredibly, on a true story and developed from a successful stage musical, this is a big-hearted, barnstorming put-on-a-show crowd-pleaser." (*Time Out*)

"The combination of Irish soul music and entertaining American troops in Vietnam inevitably suggests a meeting between Alan Parker's *The Commitments* and Robin Williams' *Good Morning Vietnam*. I guess what we have here is G'day Vietnam!" (*Observer*; and what a wag) (*Simon Messenger*) Fabulous, don't miss.



Director: Ben Affleck
Starring: Ben Affleck, Alan Arkin, John Goodman
Certificate: 15
Duration: 120 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Warner Brothers



Argo

**Fri 14 7.30, Sat 15 7.00,
Wed 19 7.30**

It's Munich meets Mission: Impossible as Ben Affleck (The Town) now coming into his own with his third film behind (two in front of) the camera. Argo takes on a real-world, sensitive subject and disguises it as a tightly executed caper.

Argo is a (true) period thriller tackling an incendiary period in the history of US-Iranian relations. Set during the 1979 hostage crisis, in which local revolutionaries seized Tehran's US Embassy, Argo tells the story of six Americans who managed to escape. Holed up in the Canadian ambassador's house, their only hope of getting out alive is CIA extractor Tony Mendez (Affleck). His plan? To fly into Iran with fake IDs and convince the new powers that the six are a Canadian film crew scouting locations for a film.

There are two contrasting tones running throughout, each essential and complementary. The Tehran side is a thriller so tense you'll be hanging onto every seat. Yet we get sweet relief from the rapport between Alan Arkin and John Goodman's hotheaded movie producers as we switch back to Argo's loopy production in Hollywood.

Affleck's fairly stoic performance is squashed under the weight of such mammoth supporting roles. (*Jack Whiting*) That's why he's turned into a good director Jack. He let's everybody in, knows what's important to the story, then just walks through his own part – pure Clint.

Cinema Paradiso with The Red Balloon

Sun 16 6.00



Cinema Paradiso & The Red Balloon – the perfect match

Cinema Paradiso should have been the film to re-open the Rex in December 2004. It wasn't available then, some quibble over Rights/ownership etc. For seven years I kept on, the answer always the same... Then out the blue, it is here for Christmas 2012.

This tale of ludicrous ownership of film rights is not far off the tale of Cinema Paradiso itself. It remains the most beautiful film ever made about small town Italian life in the 1930s. Seen through the eyes of a child and its cinema, is the village square, with its whores, gangsters, cheeky kids and the priest.

The Red Balloon (1956) is another of the most beautiful (short) films ever made. Filmed entirely in the picturesque back streets and narrow parisienne alleys of the Old Ménilmontant district. "The Red Balloon has been acclaimed throughout the world as an immortal masterpiece of lyrical poetry..."

Bring everyone from your house to ours.

Director: Giuseppe Tornatore / Albert Lamorisse
Starring: Philippe Noiret, Jacques Perrin / Pascal Lamorisse, Georges Sellier
Certificate: PG / U
Duration: 125 / 34 mins
Origin: Italy/France 1988 / France 1956
By: Arrow / Park Circus

Rust & Bone

Mon 17 7.30, Tue 18 7.30

Director: Jacques Audiard
Starring: Bouli Lanners, Armand Verdure, Corinne Masiero, Marion Cotillard, Matthias Schoenaerts
Certificate: 15
Duration: 123 mins
Origin: France/Belgium 2012
By: Studiocanal

Jacques Audiard's (*The Beat That My Heart Skipped, A Prophet*) latest offering is a brutal, compelling melodrama – a non-romantic love story between a couple whose lives are violently and irrevocably changed throughout the course of the film.

Matthias Schoenaerts is Ali, a Belgian man with a young son who is forced by circumstance to live with his with long-suffering sister in Antibes. Ali works as a nightclub bouncer with dreams of becoming a successful fighter – a boxer. Marion Cotillard is Stephanie, an Orca trainer at Marineland on the Cote D'Azur. She was once rescued from a nightclub brawl by Ali, who slipped her his phone number. When Stephanie suffers life-changing injuries as the result of an accident at one of her whale shows, she finds Ali's card...

The result is that *Rust & Bone*, given what could be perceived as a highly contrived setup, is a tender and demanding love story (those who don't buy it will find the whole thing a little exploitative)

"Passion is a word casually thrown around in the movies; so few films come anywhere near it, but Jacques Audiard's *Rust and Bone* really is passionate, surging out of the screen like a tidal wave." (*Guardian*) (research Simon Messenger) Passionate, brutal, beautiful, curious, French. Don't miss.



A Christmas Carol

Thu 20 7.30



A disturbing, if spectacular, retelling of the original Dickens' morality fable, this fantastically, semi-animated, tale remains true to the original Dickens classic almost word for word.

It has an unrecognisable Jim Carey, with digital wobbling to his already rubber face, as the miser of all miserable misers, Ebenezer Scrooge enduring one single, sleepless and terrifying Christmas Eve! Thanks in no small part to the visitation of his former business partner Jacob Marley (an unlikely Gary Oldman) and other ghostly apparitions (all voiced by Carey) it stays true. It is a shame Dickens missed it on the big screen. He may have loved the scale in a medium he could never have imagined 130 years ago.

"The backdrop of wintry London town is a richly detailed box of delights packed with treats as a bulging Christmas stocking." (*Times*)

"It's a faithful adaptation, and if you're taking little kids to see it – there are some scary moments, especially the time-honoured shocker when ghostly Marley's lower jaw falls away...but there is a weird lack of passion here... a sense that Scrooge's agonised moral journey into his past is potentially pretty dull, and so Zemeckis is always livening things up by whooshing the old miser excitingly through the night sky between visions" (*Guardian*) Hold on to each other and don't miss

Director: Robert Zemeckis
Starring: Gary Oldman, Colin Firth, Jim Carrey, Robin Wright Penn
Certificate: PG
Duration: 96 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Park Circus Films

Home Alone

Fri 21 7.30

Director: Chris Columbus
Starring: Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern
Certificate: PG
Duration: 103 mins
Origin: USA 1990
By: Fox

Chris Columbus' slapstick classic comes to The Rex, and what better way to whip into Christmas than witnessing the antics of a 10-year-old defending his home from a couple of hapless burglars.

Playing out like a live action Tom & Jerry skit for kids, *Home Alone* finds young Kevin McCallister (an adorable Macaulay Culkin... what happened to him?) accidentally left behind at home as the family jet off to Paris for Christmas.

"Generally perceived by his family as a helpless, hopeless little geek, Kevin is at first delighted to be rid of them, gorging on forbidden junk food and violent videos, but when a couple of bandits (Pesci & Stern) begin circling his house, he realises he's on his own..." (*Variety*) *Home Alone* rapidly transforms in to what could only be described as *Straw Dogs* for kids with nail guns, falling irons and swinging paint tins standing between Kevin and his enemies. Not many films can draw that much sympathy for the antagonist??"

One could argue the late, great John Hughes doesn't conjure the same magical script qualities found in *Breakfast Club* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, but *Home Alone* is too busy setting alight to poor Joe Pesci's head with a blowtorch to bother with tales of morality. (*Jack Whiting*) adorable M Culkin Jack? You'd have left behind at birth.



White Christmas

Sat 22 7.00



This stunning restoration is a reminder that amid the certain gloom that digital is taking over 35mm film projection boxes, thanks to the BFI and others, there are restoration programmes in place to transform old endangered 35mm film stock into brand new digital 'prints'.

White Christmas is a treasure trove of Irving Berlin classics: 'Count Your Blessings', 'Sisters', 'Blue Skies', and the evergreen 'White Christmas'. Two song-and-dance men (Crosby and Kaye – one actually Bing can't dance) team up after the war to become one of the hottest acts in show business. One winter, after joining forces with a sister act (Gorgeous George's aunt, Rosemary Clooney and the stunning Vera Ellen) they travel to Vermont for Christmas. The real 'adventure' starts when the 'boys' discover the run-down Inn belongs to their old army general. The result is the stuff of American dreams. Shmaltzy, and unashamedly sentimental, it is a perennial Christmas favourite with a longevity unlikely to fade. The 1950s was America's boom decade. It must have been a fabulous time to be there: Brando, Dean and Doris Day; the cars, the romance, the Technicolor, and Sinatra at his best... and every home (in the movies) had lighting, a piano and a fridge while we were still rationing carrots, finishing Sunday's hotpot on Tuesday and living in grey enjoying scrubbed necks and raw cod liver oil. Don't miss.

Director: Michael Curtiz
Starring: Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney, Vera Ellen
Certificate: U
Duration: 120 mins
Origin: USA 1954
By: Park Circus Films

It's A Wonderful Life

Sun 23 6.00, Mon 24 5.00

Director: Frank Capra
Starring: James Stewart, Donna Reed, Gloria Grahame, Lionel Barrymore, Ward Bond
Certificate: U
Duration: 130 mins
Origin: USA 1946
By: Park Circus Films

Welcome to our ninth Christmas with the same old irresistible film. (8th anniversary, but our 9th Christmas!)

It was a flop at the box office when it first appeared in 1946. After the war the USA wanted fun, cars and fridges. We had bombed sites, rations and the grey 1950's with fabulous inner city trams and great (poor but imaginative) style.

It became essential TV viewing in the UK during the mid 70's, when repeated year on year, it became a new part of Christmas itself. You couldn't see it at the pictures until independents flirted with a re-release fifteen years ago. Now thanks to the BFI and now Park Circus, this beautifully restored print is here again in the build up.

A Rex Christmas wouldn't be the same without Clarence (angel 2nd class) showing George Bailey how terrible life would be in Bedford Falls, had he not been born. The simplest and best of all messages... Without you and each other, the world would be a very different place for better or worse.

As Christmas is the time for sloppy stories, come AGAIN for this, the sloppiest of all.

A very warm and happy Christmas from all of us at the Rex... Have fun. Go easy. And here's to us all still liking each other by New Years Day...



❄️ ❄️ ❄️

A
VERY
HAPPY
CHRISTMAS
FROM
ALL
AT
THE-REX

CHRISTMAS DAY
& BOXING DAY
CLOSED

❄️ ❄️ ❄️

Bolshoi Ballet's The Nutcracker Thu 27 7.30

Choreography: Yuri Grigorovich – Bolshoi
Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
 With the Orchestra of the State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia, the Bolshoi soloists and the Bolshoi Corps de Ballet
Starring: Nina Kapstova, Artem Ovcharenko, Denis Savin, Pavel Dmitrichenko
Duration: 135 mins

This is the first time we will have screened a full length ballet.

It is Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker, perfect for late December from the world renowned Bolshoi Corps de Ballet. Perhaps the best thing to come out of Russia since the turn of the 20th Century? Snide remarks aside, but too late, this should be one of the best days of the post Christmas week. It looks achingly beautiful on the big screen, likely to melt the hardest face and lift spirits high. It is curious that Russia, never being known for its gentility, should produce such extraordinary writers, dancers, composers, musicians year after year. It was filmed live in Moscow 19th December 2010. We screened La Traviata, our first opera this year and now a ballet. As long as our seat prices aren't forced to rise to ballet and opera levels we will look out for bright things we can afford, just as we do for films from across the world. The State Academic Bolshoi Orchestra will be volume perfect through the Rex speakers. We want families to see it, but be aware it's only here once and might go quickly.





Director: David O Russell
Starring: Bradley Cooper, Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro
Certificate: 15
Duration: 120 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Entertainment Film Distributors



Silver Linings Playbook

Fri 28 7.30, Sat 29 7.00

David O. Russell swiftly follows *The Fighter* with a subversive, yet brutally honest crowd pleaser. And it fits suicide week perfectly.

Damaged goods, that's Tiffany and Pat. He's a bipolar teacher just out of eight months in a state loony bin. She's a young widow, overcompensating for the death of her husband by shagging, well, anyone. "They're manic energy unleashed. But as played with go-for-broke intensity, humour and raw feeling by Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper, they're deranged romantics you can't help rooting for."

(*Rolling Stone*)

"Moving back into his dysfunctional family home with parents Robert De Niro and Jacki Weaver (the hardcase mum in *Animal Kingdom*) Pat finds rebuilding his life isn't that simple, especially as his social filter is clogged and his anger management leaves something to be desired."

(*Total Film*)

"It zips along on its off-beat energy and fast-paced wisecracking script. It's undemanding, but funny, honest even, about mental health without being patronising and best of all, it's brilliantly acted."

(*Time Out*)

"More than anything else, though, it's just nice to see Russell revisit his darkly comic comfort zone. That an echo of his unique voice can still be heard through the fog of this more populist comedy drama is good news indeed"

(*Little White Lies*) who writes, No, types this stuff?

Watch out, it could steal some Oscar bingo..?

Untouchable

Sun 30 6.00



A huge box office smash in France and now around the world, even New York! Watch it clean up for Best Foreign Language Picture at February's Oscars.

The film chronicles the unlikely burgeoning friendship between Philippe (François Cluzet), a wealthy and cultured quadriplegic, and Driss (Omar Sy) a young banlieue-dwelling (slums/projects/sink estates) French West African hired to be his live-in carer...

It is routine "odd-couple shtick" but it works gloriously, simultaneously wry and tender hearted. Perhaps inevitably, Philippe and Driss quickly disregard the cosmic differences between them to reveal more about themselves in the process. Philippe's reluctant romantic involvement with his pen-friend; Driss with his flirtatious, mischievous ways and his deep rooted family troubles...

"A charming, uplifting French drama, an irreverent, humorous take on disability, closely drawn from real-life." (*Guardian*) "Untouchable's moral is optimistic: give a man responsibility and he will act responsibly? This is not a film to change the world, but might charm it." (*Telegraph*) (*SM*) From its opening ambiguity, it draws you in, teasing an uncertain tension, before you fall in love with them and the whole tale. If unlucky in December, we won't let you miss it. It will be back and back. Only the French (or anyone but us or the yanks) can make films like this. However, silly arse Hollywood has bought the rights...

Directors: Oliver Nakache, Eric Toledano
Starring: François Cluzet, Omar Sy, Audrey Fleurot, Clotilde Mollet
Certificate: 15
Duration: 112 mins
Origin: France 2012
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

High Society

Mon 31 6.00

Directors: Charles Walters
Starring: Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Grace Kelly
Certificate: U
Duration: 107 mins
Origin: USA 1956
By: British Film Institute (BFI)

All ages must come and see this first 'pop-promo-video' on the big screen.

Just to see how old (a proper age) you had to be to be a Film Star. And just how really cool you had to be to do song and dance routines LIVE to camera. Even though Frank can't dance and wouldn't do more than one take. His stubbornness makes the routines immediate, unpolished and more precious to witness, than a hundred rehearsals.

A musical remake of the screwball comedy *The Philadelphia Story*, starring Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart; made ten or so years earlier.

Think Louis Armstrong, think 1940/50's innocence. Think Grace Kelly and her beauty still unmatched.

Think Frank and Bing. Think of a life so far outside our own. Pure glorious Hollywood fantasy, where style is all and men's voluminous trousers covered their bottoms! Bing as the romantic lead is hard to swallow but he's cool and croons. Frank is skinny and naïve. He has a couple of the best Hollywood duets ever. One classic, *A Swell Party*... with Bing, sees him shuffling cheekily around a stiff Bing. Frank's other iconic one-take duet: Who wants to be a Millionaire is with the fabulous Celeste Holm (who has all the best lines).

Well, did you ever? What a swell party this is to herald another brave New Year. Don't miss.



COMING SOON

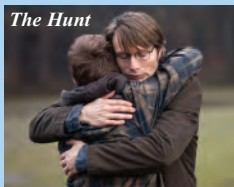
New releases

The Hunt
 Quartet
 Amour
 The Twilight Saga:
 Breaking Dawn

Back by demand

Skyfall
 Lawrence of Arabia
 (restored print)
 Silver Linings Playbook
 Samsara

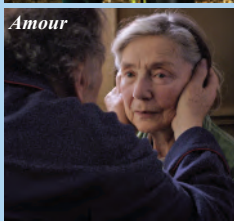
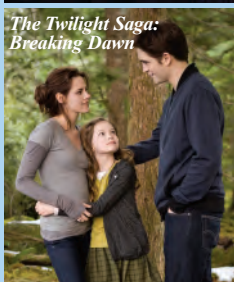
The Hunt



Quartet



Amour

The Twilight Saga:
Breaking Dawn

DECEMBER FILMS AT A GLANCE

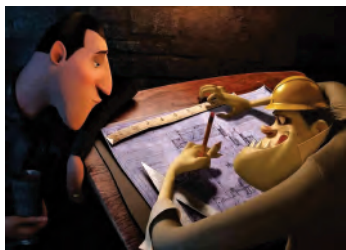
Please check times carefully and watch out for early shows.

1	Sat	HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA	2.00
1	Sat	SKYFALL	7.00
2	Sun	SKYFALL	6.00
3	Mon	SKYFALL	2.00, 7.30
4	Tue	SKYFALL	12.30, 7.30
5	Wed	SKYFALL	2.00
5	Wed	ANNIVERSARY SCREENING: SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS	7.30
6	Thu	SKYFALL	2.00
6	Thu	SKYFALL	7.30
7	Fri	SKYFALL	7.30
8	Sat	MADAGASCAR 3	2.00
8	Sat	THE MASTER	7.00
9	Sun	THE MASTER	6.00
10	Mon	BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD	2.00, 7.30
11	Tue	THE MASTER	12.30
11	Tue	BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD	7.30
12	Wed	THE MASTER	2.00
12	Wed	THE SAPPHIRES	7.30
13	Thu	THE SAPPHIRES	2.00, 7.30
14	Fri	ARGO	7.30
15	Sat	ARTHUR CHRISTMAS	2.00
15	Sat	ARGO	7.00
16	Sun	CINEMA PARADISO & RED BALLOON	6.00
17	Mon	UNTOUCHABLE	2.00
17	Mon	RUST & BONE	7.30
18	Tue	ARTHUR CHRISTMAS	12.30
18	Tue	RUST & BONE	7.30
19	Wed	ARGO	2.00, 7.30
20	Thu	IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE	2.00
20	Thu	A CHRISTMAS CAROL	7.30
21	Fri	HOME ALONE	7.30
22	Sat	POLAR EXPRESS	2.00
22	Sat	WHITE CHRISTMAS	7.00
23	Sun	ARTHUR CHRISTMAS	2.00
23	Sun	IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE	6.00
24	Mon	IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE	5.00
25	Tue	CINEMA CLOSED	
26	Wed	CINEMA CLOSED	
27	Thu	THE NUTCRACKER	7.30
28	Fri	SKYFALL	2.00
28	Fri	SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK	7.30
29	Sat	FRANKENWEENIE	2.00
29	Sat	SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK	7.00
30	Sun	UNTOUCHABLE	6.00
31	Mon	HIGH SOCIETY	6.00



D E C E M B E R 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



Director: Genndy Tartakovsky
Starring: Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Selena Gomez
Certificate: U
Duration: 91 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Sony Pictures Releasing



Hotel Transylvania

Sat 1 2.00

Here is an animated family comedy about a hotel set up by Count Dracula to be a restful hideaway for creepy creatures and beasts of all sorts who need a respite from being perpetually persecuted by civilians, muggles and general non-scary humans.

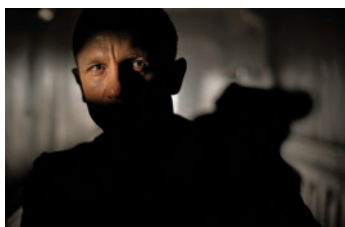
The Count (voiced by Adam Sandler) is very protective about his teenage daughter Mavis (Selena Gomez), and is intensely annoyed when a gormless, lost human hitchhiker, Jonathan (Andy Samberg), accidentally blunders up to the hotel asking for a room, and Mavis takes a shine to him.

"No one does saccharine like Adam Sandler. The man can be sharp, angry and funny, but when he lays on the sweetness, it's like drowning in an avalanche of Tate & Lyle." (*Time Out*)

"With auto-tuned songs and unfunny jokes, Sandler and co. can't re-animate the script, leaving director Tartakovsky rather stranded." (*Empire*)

"It's inventive, wittily drawn, macabre in a Charles Addams vein." (*Observer*) It sounds okay or abysmal. Look on the bright side: go for abysmal and you can't be disappointed.





Director: Sam Mendes
Starring: Daniel Craig, Judi Dench, Javier Bardem, Ralph Fiennes
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 145 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Sony Pictures Releasing



Skyfall

Mon 3 2.00, **Tue 4** 12.30,
Wed 5 2.00, **Thu 6** 2.00

James Bond is back, in a suit too tight and a face too straight, apart from that it promises to be a fab film, with even better things going on at the Rex.

We've got it early, didn't expect it till January, so will celebrate it throughout the first week in December. Well done to those who have waited to see it here, or have come to see it again properly in decent Fleming surroundings. It is the first film we've shown for a whole week. Luckily there is a break on Wednesday 5th for our eighth anniversary (Seven Psychopaths – it will be talked about well into next year, and much longer than silly Skyfall). But for the moment, come dressed to kill or come as you are – unstirred.



Madagascar 3

Sat 8 2.00



With the appeal of life in Africa rapidly waning, our heroes: Alex (Stiller), Marty (Rock), Melman (Schwimmer) and Gloria (Pinkett-Smith), plus King Julien XIII (Baron Cohen) decide to go home to New York, via Europe. But France's top animal control inspector forces them to run away with the circus...

"This is that rare thing: a franchise that grows more winning with each instalment. The garish, noisy 'Madagascar' series has always been something of a circus, so it's fitting that this ingratiatingly manic third entry finds its quartet of Yankified African beasts actually in a big top." (*Time Out*) "Powered by a dazzling circus act, a gaggle of goofy accents and a fresh dose of action-adventure silliness, Madagascar 3 severs the DreamWorks toon franchise's ties with reality entirely and emerges none the worse for it. Good-humored, endearing, full of energy and colour."

(*Variety*)

"A muscular, potent and very funny film" (*Guardian*)

Smile and wave boys; smile and wave...

Director: Eric Darnell
Starring: Ben Stiller, Chris Rock, David Schwimmer
Certificate: PG
Duration: 93 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Paramount International Pictures

Beasts Of The Southern Wild

Mon 10 2.00

Director: Benh Zeitlin
Starring: Quvenzhané Wallis, Dwight Henry
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 93 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Studiocanal

"The best feel-good movie of the year" is a tagline usually to be mistrusted. It conjures images of embarrassing sing a longs (take a bow Mama Mia! And the silly closing scene of *Slumdog Millionaire*). Thankfully Benh Zeitlin's cracking debut draws a whole range of 'good' emotions.

"The film follows a fiercely independent six-year-old, Hushpuppy (Quvenzhané Wallis), who is trying to make her way in a bayou community dubbed 'the Bathtub'. Hushpuppy is not your average child. She cooks for herself, takes care of her animals and freely roams the swampy land she calls home. Her terminally ill alcoholic father is raising her to be as self-sufficient as possible, knowing that he may not be around to take care of her for long.

A powerful film about a tiny girl trying as best as she can to adapt to love, loss and abandonment amidst her huge ever-changing, unforgiving world.

"It creates a world to get lost in, a world of beauty, terror and mythic wonder. Zeitlin said he wanted to merge the poetics of an art film with something that feels like *Die Hard*." (*Rolling Stone*).

Well he did, and it combines those elements beautifully. Don't hesitate. It's got Best Picture written all over it. (*JW*) Raw in places, but a definite don't miss for the whole family (whatever the certificate says).



The Master

Tue 11 12.30, Wed 12 2.00



Half a decade since *There Will Be Blood*, Paul Thomas Anderson's latest masterpiece? finally comes ashore.

On leaving the Navy after WWII, Freddie Quell (Phoenix) fails to connect to the Golden Age of American Capitalism. With a cocktail of PTSD and drink, he drifts. Waking up on a fun-party yacht, he meets Lancaster Dodd (Hoffman) the founding leader of 'The Cause'. Uh oh... Said to be only loosely based on L. Ron Hubbard, *The Master* is not meant as an exposé of Scientology? "It is a breathtaking, singular, technically audacious film, white hot with emotion, boasting scenes so powerful they'll stay with you for days" (*Total Film*)

Certainly worthwhile for the greatness of Hoffman and Phoenix's performances. (*Anna Shepherd*) OR

"It has a self conscious swagger. The kind of film made to win Oscars... There's a feeling that they are always acting and seemed to be acting in separate rooms" (*BBC R4 Front Row*)

"Critics have said you seem to be making it up as you go along" (*Francine Stock*). Anderson (angry) "What else you going to do? We make everything up as we go along... You're making your questions up as you go along I'm making up the answers as I go along..." (*Film Prog BBC R4*) Learn from The Coens - schoolboy. I hated *There will be Blood* too. Ps *The Master* is two hours too long too.

Director: Paul Thomas Anderson
Starring: Joaquin Phoenix, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams
Certificate: 15
Duration: 144 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Entertainment Film Distributors

The Sapphires

Thu 13 2.00

Director: Wayne Blair
Starring: Chris O'Dowd, Deborah Mailman, Jessica Mauboy, Miranda Tapsell
Certificate: PG
Duration: 103 mins
Origin: Australia 2012
By: Entertainment One UK

Directed by Wayne Blair and based on Tony Briggs' play, *The Sapphires* is a warm, soulful Australian comedy drama – and true...

Australia, 1968. Four indigenous young women, Gail (Deborah Mailman), Julie (Jessica Mauboy), Kay (Shari Sebbens) and Cynthia (Miranda Tapsell), play country and western gigs to small, disinterested white audiences in crappy outback bars. Seemingly going nowhere, the four encounter a boozy Irish talent scout Dave Lovelace (Chris O'Dowd) who, sensing their natural talents, offers to manage them and suggests they change their style to an all-girl soul group.

With some encouragement the transition is a success, and before long Dave reveals he's booked them a gig abroad; a morale-boosting mission to perform for the troops in Saigon...

It's an utterly charming, feel-good film; fantastic music, hilarious in parts and, after a series of Hollywood bit parts, an excellent vehicle for the eloquent comic talents of Chris O'Dowd.

"Based, incredibly, on a true story and developed from a successful stage musical, this is a big-hearted, barnstorming put-on-a-show crowd-pleaser." (*Time Out*)

"The combination of Irish soul music and entertaining American troops in Vietnam inevitably suggests a meeting between Alan Parker's *The Commitments* and Robin Williams' *Good Morning Vietnam*. I guess what we have here is G'day Vietnam!" (*Observer*, and what a wag) (*Simon Messenger*) Fabulous, don't miss.



Arthur Christmas

Sat 15 2.00, Tue 18 12.30,
Sun 23 2.00



This was a fabulous hit last Christmas, telling the delicious story of Arthur, the youngest of the Christmas family on a vital mission...

It's the night before Christmas, and the complexity of Father Christmas' (Jim Broadbent) annual trek is laid bare. How DOES he get all those presents to all those children all over the world? Ah ha... His eldest son, technocrat Steve (Hugh Lawrie), runs the entire operation with military precision and a covert team of thousands of elves equipped with much high-tech gadgetry. When, lost in this colossal operation, one present goes astray, youngest son Arthur (James McAvoy) takes it upon himself to ensure that one little girl won't be left empty-handed on Christmas morning...

Masterfully written by Peter Baynham and Sarah Smith, and fantastically rendered, every child and grown up kids will love Arthur Christmas.

"It's playful, observant, sentimental without being slushy, and boasts the kind of jokes that will still sound funny when your children or younger relatives quote them in April." (*Telegraph*)

"Aardman films' yuletide offering is both a heartwarmer and a sly dig at the gospel of family togetherness, a witty wonder of invention. Should keep the whole family chuckling from now to New Year."

(*Independent*) (SM). A rare Christmas gem. Don't miss.

Directors: Sarah Smith
Certificate: U
Duration: 97 mins
Origin: UK/USA 2011
By: Sony Pictures Releasing

Untouchable

Mon 17 2.00

Directors: Oliver Nakache, Eric Toledano
Starring: François Cluzet, Omar Sy,
Certificate: 15
Duration: 112 mins
Origin: France 2012
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

A huge box office smash in France and now around the world, even New York! Watch it clean up for Best Foreign Language Picture at February's Oscars.

The film chronicles the unlikely burgeoning friendship between Philippe (François Cluzet), a wealthy and cultured quadriplegic, and Driss (Omar Sy) a young banlieue-dwelling (slums/projects/ sink estates) French West African hired to be his live-in carer...

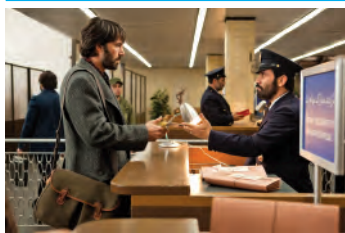
It is routine "odd-couple shtick" but it works gloriously, simultaneously wry and tender hearted. Perhaps inevitably, Philippe and Driss quickly disregard the cosmic differences between them to reveal more about themselves in the process. Philippe's reluctant romantic involvement with his pen-friend; Driss with his flirtatious, mischievous ways and his deep rooted family troubles...

"A charming, uplifting French drama, an irreverent, humorous take on disability, closely drawn from real-life." (*Guardian*) "Untouchable's moral is optimistic: give a man responsibility and he will act responsibly? This is not a film to change the world, but might charm it." (*Telegraph*) (SM) From its opening ambiguity, it draws you in, teasing an uncertain tension, before you fall in love with them and the whole tale. If unlucky in December, we won't let you miss it. It will be back and back. Only the French (or anyone but us or the yanks) can make films like this. However, silly arse Hollywood has bought the rights...





Director: Ben Affleck
Starring: Ben Affleck, Alan Arkin, John Goodman
Certificate: 15
Duration: 120 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Warner Brothers



Argo

Wed 19 2.00

It's Munich meets Mission: Impossible as Ben Affleck (*The Town*) now coming into his own with his third film behind (two in front of) the camera. *Argo* takes on a real-world, sensitive subject and disguises it as a tightly executed caper.

Argo is a (true) period thriller tackling an incendiary period in the history of US-Iranian relations. Set during the 1979 hostage crisis, in which local revolutionaries seized Tehran's US Embassy, *Argo* tells the story of six Americans who managed to escape.

Holed up in the Canadian ambassador's house, their only hope of getting out alive is CIA extractor Tony Mendez (Affleck). His plan? To fly into Iran with fake IDs and convince the new powers that the six are a Canadian film crew scouting locations for a film.

There are two contrasting tones running throughout, each essential and complementary. The Tehran side is a thriller so tense you'll be hanging onto every seat. Yet we get sweet relief from the rapport between Alan Arkin and John Goodman's hotheaded movie producers as we switch back to *Argo*'s loopy production in Hollywood.

Affleck's fairly stoic performance is squashed under the weight of such mammoth supporting roles. (*Jack Whiting*) That's why he's turned into a good director Jack. He let's everybody in, knows what's important to the story, then just walks through his own part – pure Clint.

It's A Wonderful Life

Thu 20 2.00



Welcome to our ninth Christmas with the same old irresistible film. (8th anniversary, but our 9th Christmas!)

It was a flop at the box office when it first appeared in 1946. After the war the USA wanted fun, cars and fridges. We had bombed sites, rations and the grey 1950's with fabulous inner city trams and great (poor but imaginative) style.

It became essential TV viewing in the UK during the mid 70's, when repeated year on year, it became a new part of Christmas itself. You couldn't see it at the pictures until independents flirted with a re-release fifteen years ago. Now thanks to the BFI and now Park Circus, this beautifully restored print is here again in the build up.

A Rex Christmas wouldn't be the same without Clarence (angel 2nd class) showing George Bailey how terrible life would be in Bedford Falls, had he not been born. The simplest and best of all messages... Without you and each other, the world would be a very different place for better or worse.

As Christmas is the time for sloppy stories, come AGAIN for this, the sloppiest of all.

A very warm and happy Christmas from all of us at the Rex... Have fun. Go easy. And here's to us all still liking each other by New Years Day...

Director: Frank Capra
Starring: James Stewart, Donna Reed, Gloria Grahame, Lionel Barrymore, Ward Bond
Certificate: U
Duration: 130 mins
Origin: USA 1946
By: Park Circus Films

Polar Express

Sat 22 2.00

Director: Robert Zemeckis
Starring: Tom Hanks, Andrew Aleson
Certificate: U
Duration: 99 mins
Origin: USA 2004
By: Warner Brothers

When a doubting boy takes an extraordinary train ride to the North Pole to find Father Christmas, he embarks on a journey of self-discovery. "The wonder of life never fades for those who believe" Never mind that, come for the heart stopping ride to find Santa's homeland.

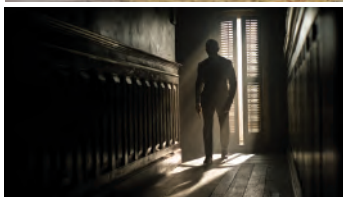
Polar Express, with its eye-popping, animated photo-realism, tells a touching family story, based upon Chris Van Allsburg's best seller. Tom Hanks is the voice (and the unfortunate, stern face) of The Conductor, who stays in charge, knows everything, but lets the children make up their own minds about each other. It is a weird, quasi-educational tale of tolerance, discovery and redemption. It is odd and at times a little spooky for little ones. But hold them tight and they'll be alright. You'll need somebody to hold too!

At its best, it is a heart-in-the-mouth, fantastical adventure from start to finish; spectacular on the big screen, with a very happy ending. In eight short years it too has become an essential part of our Christmas programme. At its worst, tiny ones (under 7s) will be thrilled but a little frightened, perhaps as they should, by white haired old men bearing gifts. Remember: every tale takes our heroes on adventures and gets them into terrible trouble, then gets them out of it again... for that happily-ever-after ending. Don't miss.



Skyfall

Fri 28 2.00



James Bond is back, in a suit too tight and a face too straight, apart from that it promises to be a fab film, with even better things going on at the Rex. We've got it early, didn't expect it till January, so will celebrate it throughout the first week in December. Well done to those who have waited to see it here, or have come to see it again properly in decent Fleming surroundings. It is the first film we've shown for a whole week. Luckily there is a break on Wednesday 5th for our eighth anniversary (Seven Psychopaths – it will be talked about well into next year, and much longer than silly Skyfall). But for the moment, come dressed to kill or come as you are – unstirred.

Director: Sam Mendes
Starring: Daniel Craig, Judi Dench, Javier Bardem, Ralph Fiennes
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 145 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Sony Pictures Releasing

Frankenweenie

Sat 29 2.00

Director: Tim Burton
Voices: Charlie Tahan, Winona Ryder
Certificate: PG
Duration: 87 mins
Origin: USA 2012
By: Walt Disney

After almost a decade of Depp induced disappointments, Tim Burton returns to his gloriously macabre past by giving his early eighties short a new lease of life.

The end product is a touching and wholly personal tale of a boy and his dog.

Yet as we know with anything Burton does, nothing is ever quite normal.

Frankenweenie tells the story of Victor, an awkward schoolboy and a vague alter ego of the filmmaker's younger self, who brings his dead dog Sparky back to life with the help of lightning.

"It's Frankenstein, softened and re-imagined in the postwar American suburbs, with that gentle stamp all over it of the mid-century American horror movies that Burton grew up on." (*Time Out*)

Much like *Corpse Bride*, *Frankenweenie* is a stop-animation beauty; with a black and white palette rich with gothic imagery.

"The best movie monsters feast on very real fears; Godzilla and the atom bomb, Dracula and promiscuity and in the same way, Sparky says something profound about the way children deal with bereavement." (*Telegraph*)

Unlike *ParaNorman* and *Hotel Transylvania*, Burton's labour of love has a true natural sense of the bizarre, particularly recalling classic Hammer. Fear not kids, at its heart *Frankenweenie* is deeply sweet, and very funny. (*Jack Whiting*) Tell that to the home-alone kid Jack. No scarier than Santa and a lot more fun. Bring the whole malingering family, grandma too. Leave the dog... home alone.



ALUN REES (OCT 1931 - NOV 2012)

Mr Rees: downstairs at The Rex 2010



On Friday 16th November we buried Mr Rees (as he is still addressed at the Rex). It was a perfect funeral day, cold, grey and threatening rain, right out of the Third Man, a scene he would have projected many times on screen. So we saw him off two weeks after his 81st birthday on the same kind of day he arrived in Berkhamsted.

It was cold and dark as he rode into town on his motorbike from Stroud. It was 1977 and fashion was in a pretty bad way. It was against such a bleak backdrop Alun Rees, a mere 45, had come to take on the Rex!

He was to run the two-screen programming and be responsible for everything else too, including projection, simultaneously on both screens, running the box office and collecting tickets, just like the old travelling circus, where the man who let you in was flying through the air half an hour later. In February 1988 he saw the last film out and closed up for good, or so he thought. In November 2004, aged just 74, I invited him to return as chief projectionist and to train the new novices. "Splendid" he said. I've never forgotten the immediacy of that positive answer, and how relieved I was to have him back in his old space surrounded by two fabulous 2nd hand DP 70 film projectors meticulously restored by Ed Mauger (and still here). So Mr Rees, duly opened the new Rex on 5th Dec

2004 with *The Third Man* (ironically) back on the big screen, set into the stage where it began and belonged 66 years earlier when it first opened in May 1938.

Having him here created just the right spirit to kick start the Rex and make it the success it became under his impeccable projection, and his patient instruction of the new young trainees (now fully qualified) pictured with Alun on 'the bridge' and in row E on his 80th birthday last year, which he turned into his retirement party. After his wife Kaye had died some years earlier, he put himself firmly back into the projection box. But such energy in mourning could only last so long. He had seen the Rex close and re-open 16 years later, once more under his vital leadership. He had trained the new brood of projectionists to his own high standards. His work was done and with the introduction of digital projection he decided, on his 80th birthday in October last year, it was time. So on that day he cut the cake, raised his glass and bid us all adieu. Thank you, to the splendid Mr Rees, we now raise ours to bid you adieu.

NB You will still find him in the Rex staff list under **Alun Rees** Chief projectionist (ret'd)

11/11/2012

The Manager,

Please find enclosed two spoons inadvertently taken home by mistake. We did not carry a tray for our coffees so my husband slipped the spoons into his pocket and then completely forgot them as neither of us has sugar.

Yours faithfully,
P.S Morgan Mrs

Posted in a jiffy bag, so averting the great spoon robbery.

Well done PS Morgan (Mrs)



Standing proud and in his prime (the old Rex box 1977)



All of us on 'the bridge' for Alun's 80th - Oct 2011



Mr Rees with apprentices: Jon, Martin and Anna

GOODBYE FAREWELL ADIEU...

I have been privileged to know two Reeses (one Reece one Rees) who died this year. One had just turned 81 the other only 30. One since she was tiny, the other since his mercurial early seventies.

MAXINE REECE (1981- 2012)

You may have heard Boxmoor Arts Centre mentioned here and there. Throughout the 1970s & 80s it was a thriving hub for young and older kids from all over. Anybody with half an idea could come and try it out, and there were many such ideas not fully baked given time and space. Neither her parents nor I, can remember how old she was when she tagged along behind her older sister Gemma at Wednesdays drama workshops, but she probably got pushed into 'third five year old all-singing-dancing barmaid from the left' in our version of Fat Sam's Grand Slam (Bugsy Malone-ish) in 1985/86/87? She was a gem then and grew up into one against all odds and hospital predictions. She should have died any minute from the day she was born, but thwarted that finger for over thirty years, by which time she was here to stay. We know the game's not fair but that's being tripped up on the home straight. Her parents, Dave and Eileen Reece were her devoted engine, keeping up the revs. Even running on empty at times, they never gave up. They made things normal for her, though it was probably the kind of 'normal' in the colourful Reece household that kept her going so long. Maxine was a quarter of a loving family and just as much a pain at the usual times as her sister and the grown-ups. Her loss must feel like all the corners have fallen into the same hole. The best is she beat her own body by thirty years to be part of the million memories of a life fully lived.

This is how her sister remembers her. Edited from a tribute on behalf of her Mum and Dad (first published in the Echo newsletter 2012).

A life less ordinary – Maxine Reece

When Maxine was born in 1981 with complex, inoperable congenital heart disease and doctors told us the outlook for our new baby was not good, they could not



have dared to imagine the beautiful, successful and independent woman our daughter was to become.

At Guy's Hospital as a teenager, she was a smiling face on the paediatric ward and was always visiting the babies to cheer her up during long, painful stays. Her love of the little ones developed into a career, when Maxine decided to pursue childcare after leaving school. She worked at children's clubs and nurseries, fiercely proud of her commitment to earning a living.

Maxine's true love was theatre. As a well-known amateur actress in her hometown Tring, she appeared in everything, or so it seemed. We counted 28 shows over 25 years! Her unforgettable comic performance as Alice in The Vicar of Dibley had the audience in literal tears of laughter. She loved the shows, the social life of the theatre, the dressing up and the banter.

Maxine passed away in April this year. She had become ill out of the blue, but sadly didn't make it through her last three operations. A huge surge of love and support poured from family and friends. Maxine had become such a well-loved face in Tring, that one friend remarked: 'She was a huge part of our culture.'

As the tributes poured in, one word kept appearing over and over again:

'Inspirational.' Many people were

touched by Maxine's joie de vivre in the face of such relentless adversity.

Her uncomplaining acceptance of life on the edge, day-after-day, has a lot to teach us all. (Gemma Reece)

ODYSSEY LATEST (NOVEMBER)



The news at the Odyssey is good. Slow, but it was never anything but. We know who everybody is now. At first a 'main contractor' and 'project management team' were like rap lyrics, for all the sense it made to me. Now we know all the faces, we can talk back when the dreaded phrase 'well you're the client' is used. The plans and drawings have been signed off. This means I have agreed in principle how 90% of the place will function and look. Put simply, I have agreed to 90% of what's going where and how it will get there; how we will light it, drain it, reach it and sit on it. I'm glad it has taken these four months. We are only going to do this once. So when we open the doors in the Spring of 2014 we will know where everything is, why it's there and what it does – and so will you. After preliminary work is signed off, we expect to start building in January. You should see scaffolding going up earlier. But I'm only the client. Stay cool, it is really quite exciting now.



stairways to heaven...?

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