Michel Lawrence captures All of Us >>p20

February book, CD & DVD new releases. More inside >>

FICTION
Normally $29.95
Our price $24.95 >> p8

FICTION
Normally $45
Our price $35.95 >> p8

CRIME
Normally $32.95
Our price $27.95 >> p8

DVD
As it is in Heaven (Avail. 13.2.08)
$34.95 >> p24

POP CD
Cat Power Jukebox
$24.95 standard
$29.95 deluxe >> p23

CLASSICAL
Opera Australia
Dvorak: Rusalka
3 CD Set
$69.95 >> p30
Readings Events in February

All our events are free, unless otherwise stated. For more information, please call the shop where the event is to be held, or the booking number provided.

7 PETA MALINS LAUNCH
Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) is one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. His ideas have influenced fields as diverse as architecture, science, economics and the arts, and are increasingly being taken up in social research and practice. Deleuzian Encounters: Studies in Contemporary Social Issues (edited by Anna Hickey-Moody and Peta Malins, Palgrave, HB, $144) brings together sixteen accessible, thought-provoking essays which examine the implications of Deleuze’s philosophy for contemporary social issues. Professor Noel Gough, from School of Outdoor Education and Environments at La Trobe University (Bendigo) is launching the book.
Thursday 7 February, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.
Free, no need to book.

11 AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, PETER CHRISTOFF
Readings and the Australian Institute of International Affairs welcome Peter Christoff to our first public discussion on issues that affect our world. Dr Peter Christoff of the University of Melbourne and Vice President of the Australian Conservation Foundation will be discussing the new book Climate Law in Australia (Federation Press, PB, $59.95), edited by Tim Bonyhady and Peter Christoff. This book provides the first extended account of Australia’s new climate law. It examines key federal and state legislation and the main cases brought before Australian courts. It combines incisive legal analysis with a deep understanding of climate-related issues and policy. The authors include leading academics such as Professors Robyn Eckersey, David Farrier, Rob Fowler and Jan McDonald, and leading practitioners such as Charles Berger, Kirsty Ruddock, Chris McGrath, Allison Warburton and Martijn Wilder.

12 JAMES BOYCE LAUNCH
Van Diemen’s Land (p16, Black Inc., HB, $49.95) is a new, groundbreaking history of the settlement of Tasmania. James Boyce’s book is filled with new facts and new ideas about one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of British colonialism. Combining environmental insights with an unrivalled grasp of the politics of the frontier, it will change the way scholars and the general public alike view Australian colonial history. To be launched by Richard Flanagan.
Tuesday 12 February, 6.30pm North Fitzroy Star, Cnr Newry St & St Georges Rd South, North Fitzroy
RSVP essential by Monday 11 February 2008 Please phone: (03) 9654 2000, or email: admin@blackincbooks.com

13 ROBERT HOLLINGWORTH LAUNCH
They Called Me the Wildman (Murdoch, PB, $29.95) is historian and artist Robert Hollingworth’s captivating reconstruction of Swedish-born naturalist Henricke Nelsen’s solitary life. Hollingworth lived on a mountain in Victoria’s Tallarook Ranges in the 1860s. Hollingworth has written Henricke’s life story in the form of a prison diary. Nelsen’s personal reflections interweave with fascinating and engrossing depictions of life in Australia in the early to mid 1800s, providing insights into the issues of early white settlement: of race, class, land development, commerce and trade, the law and living conditions in general.
Wednesday 13 February, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.
Free, no need to book.

17 MILK
Our first in-store of the year at Port Melbourne. Enjoy a glass of wine, sit back and enjoy the sweet sounds. Their new album, Shipwrecked at the Royal Oak ($29.95) is a wonderful blend of folk, jazz and roots all wrapped up in one. Brilliant!
Sunday 17 February, 2pm, Readings Port Melbourne.
Free, no need to book.

20 JAMES FRANKLIN LAUNCH
Life to the Full: Rights and Social Justice in Australia edited by James Franklin (Conor Court, PB, $29.95) explains in clear and simple language that traditional Christian social justice theory is neither socialist nor free-market, neither naïve nor utopian, but the framework that has already made our society one of the most just and liveable in the world.
Wednesday 20 February, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.
Free, no need to book.

22 BRUNSWICK WOMEN’S CHOIR LAUNCH
We are proud to have The Brunswick Women’s Choir singing in store. Peace Cannot be Silent ($25) is their new CD, which has a selection of works composed by local musician Jennie Swain. It features songs that reflect the choir’s views about peace and reconciliation. This new CD was the result of an 18-month project exploring what peace means to us. ‘The project was a way to respond to the injustices we see in the world today,’ said Cathy Nixon, the choir’s director. More than 200 women have been part of Brunswick Women’s Choir during its 15-year history. To celebrate this, a new book has been compiled. Seeking Harmony (PB, $25) records these women’s stories of enrichment, empowerment and skill development. The book captures the spirit of this vibrant community of women and chronicles the development of the choir.
Friday 22 February, 6pm Readings Carlton.
Free, no need to book.

26 TONY COADY LAUNCH
Tony Coady has an outstanding international reputation for his writings on political violence and political ethics. He previously founded and became director of the Centre for Philosophy and Public Issues, the first centre in Australia to be concerned with broad issues of philosophy and public affairs. Melbourne University Vice-Chancellor Glyn Davis will launch Morality and Political Violence (CUP, PB, $47.95).
Is there such a thing as a ‘just war?’ Can terrorism be morally justified? Tony Coady’s new work examines political violence in the form of wars, insurgencies, terrorism and violent rebellion from an ethical perspective.
Tuesday 26 February, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.
Free, no need to book.

27 PROFESSOR CATHY REISSMAN LAUNCH
Cathy Reissman is a visiting scholar of Victoria University, Melbourne, and of ‘Narrative Network Australia’. Cathy is an acclaimed teacher as well as an internationally renowned researcher. She has been called the ‘mother’ of narrative research.
Her much awaited new book, Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences (Sage, PB, $37.95) will be launched.
Wednesday 27 February, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.
Free, no need to book.
Welcome back to our first monthly discussion of the year! John Carroll will discuss David Tacey’s How to Read Jung (Granta, PB, $19.95). In this book, Tacey introduces the reader to Jung’s unique style and approach, and, in a series of close readings of Jung’s works, explores the radical themes at the core of Jung’s psychology, and the vision of a ‘whole self’ that inspires Jung’s work. John Carroll is Professor of Sociology at La Trobe University in Melbourne. His recent books include Terror: a Meditation on the Meaning of September 11 (2002), The Wreck of Western Culture: Humanism Revisited (2004), and The Existential Jesus (2007). He is also a frequent writer of essays and newspaper articles. He delivered one of the Alfred Deakin Federation Lectures in 2001.

Friday 29 February, 6pm, Readings Carlton. Free, no need to book.

COMING UP IN MARCH

Look out in March as we celebrate International Women’s Day with a host of women writers, including Anne Manne, Lee Fox, Linda Grant, Siri Hustvedt (pictured) and more. You can keep checking for more about upcoming events at www.readings.com.au or email us at events@readings.com.au.

Thursday 28 February, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton. Free, no need to book.

An unwanted baby
A deathly love story
A thrilling novel that won’t let you go

In her acclaimed debut Topolski delivers a potent portrayal of a society couple, so consumed by each other, that they will commit the ultimate evil in order to let nothing come between them.

Brendan and Sherlyn are in love. So wrapped up in each other are these lovers that their neighbours barely know them, their families and work colleagues only know what they see on the surface. The perfect couple, the perfect home, the perfect car crouching in the drive.

And then a baby is born – suddenly contaminating their pristine life. But these lovers soon find the ideal solution, marking their happy ending and the beginning of everyone else’s indescribable nightmare...

Peering directly into the heart of evil, this deeply dark literary thriller opens the door on a perversive world of obsession, secrets and utter abandonment.

FOR THE LATEST NEWS AND SUBSCRIBER BENEFITS SIGN UP TO OUR MONTHLY PENGUIN NEWSLETTER AT PENGUIN.COM.AU

OUT NOW

A wonderful tale of a book binder, Dicken’s London, and pornography

LONDON, 1859.

When Dora Damage discovers her husband’s arthritic hands are crippled, putting his book-binding business into huge debt and his family in danger of entering the poorhouse, she resolves to rescue her family at any price. Taking to the streets, Dora soon finds herself lured into illegally binding expensive volumes of pornography commissioned by aristocrats. Belinda Starling’s debut novel is a startling vision of London during the 19th century.

LONDON

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OUT NOW

Revolution in Mind
The Creation of Psychoanalysis

George Makari

‘taking sex from the bedroom to the couch’
rrp $45.00

‘a formidable and important book’
rrp $55.00

BLOOD AND SOIL
A World History of Violence and Coexistence

Ben Kiernan

An unwanted baby
A deathly love story
A thrilling novel that won’t let you go

In her acclaimed debut Topolski delivers a potent portrayal of a society couple, so consumed by each other, that they will commit the ultimate evil in order to let nothing come between them.

Brendan and Sherlyn are in love. So wrapped up in each other are these lovers that their neighbours barely know them, their families and work colleagues only know what they see on the surface. The perfect couple, the perfect home, the perfect car crouching in the drive.

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Peering directly into the heart of evil, this deeply dark literary thriller opens the door on a perversive world of obsession, secrets and utter abandonment.
Counting Her Blessings

Louise Swinn talks to Toni Jordan, author of Addition

First-time novelist Toni Jordan has had an extraordinary 12 months. A year ago, Text Publishing's Michael Heyward had just signed up her first novel, Addition. Since then, Text has sold rights into North America, the UK, Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Israel and the Czech Republic. It’s not all that surprising, then, that she has a contagious I-can-hardly-believe-my-luck kind of look on her face.

But Jordan’s journey is about more than luck; she has managed to incorporate a quirky main character into a narrative like those she admires – ‘easy to read, but well written’. Addition is the story of Grace, a woman whose obsession with numbers and counting things (letters in a name, poppy seeds in a piece of cake) seriously affects how she lives.

One day, on her usual routine, which is calculated down to the last minute, Grace meets Seamus and for the first time she is given a reason to attempt to live less peculiarly. It isn’t easy, though; she seeks help in the form of group therapy and medication, which gives her the sensation – comic for the reader – of having two brains. Things appear to be working well for a little while but as the story progresses we are forced to consider whether life is better being ‘normal’ by society’s standards, or if being true to yourself is more important.

A humorous, romantic story set in a very recognisable Melbourne, it is the product of nine years. ‘You really have to live somewhere else to realise how great it is here.’

A physiologist by training, an early sign of Jordan’s love of books can be traced back to when she was a teenager. After reading Crime and Punishment, she couldn’t get out of bed for three days. She laughs when asked if she’s serious. ‘Yes!’ Despite being so moved by literature, she studied science at university in Brisbane, where she grew up. She describes herself as a ‘nerd’ at school and attributes her work ethic to her family. ‘We were all very serious, working-class people. The goal in life is to get a good job and then you get long-service leave.’

The story of her journey from science nerd to novelist begins with a turning point. She was the marketing manager of a large vitamin company during the 2003 Pan Pharmaceutical product recall, when she saw an article about RMIT’s Professional Writing and Editing diploma. Did she hesitate? ‘No, I never hesitate,’ she says good-naturedly. ‘Jump first. Fix up all my mistakes later!’

She’d chosen to study non-fiction, editing and corporate writing, but she could do a fourth subject. For a bit of fun, she chose ‘Novel’. Having never before written anything creative, for six months she wrote 20,000 words of ‘horrible, autobiographical … throat-clearing garbage’.

Inspiration for Addition hit on a plane. ‘This woman just popped into my head – this really kind of obnoxious, counting, obsessive woman.’ That woman became Grace, and the excerpt that Jordan wrote on that plane was in the manuscript until the final edit.

At RMIT she was in a workshop group with Chris Womersley, whose The Low Road is in some ways the antithesis of Addition. Jordan talks fondly about workshopping together. ‘It was so hilarious giving each other feedback because he’s like, there’s too many jokes, there’s too many sex scenes, and I was like, there’s too many murders, there’s too many beating things to death!’

While some writers struggle for decades, the novel Jordan began in 2004 is being published by the home of Kate Grenville and Helen Garner in 2008. And it’s hardly accidental. After listening to guest speaker Michael Williams (then working at Text), Jordan jokes that she ‘kind of stalked him’. She heard him speak at the Victorian Writers’ Centre and the Melbourne Writers’ Festival. She researched publishers, scrutinised Bookseller and Publisher, trawled writers’ blogs, and took part in a master class at Varuna. After Varuna, her writing ‘just went off like a rocket … you feel so validated, you feel like a writer’.

Jordan describes writing as ‘the greatest way’ to spend her time. ‘It’s like playing dolls in your head.’

When she began writing the character of the niece, she says, ‘my fingers typed “Larry” before I thought it … and when I saw it on the page, I thought that’s
her name? Larry? What kind of a name is Larry for a girl? I had to work out why her name was Larry … Then I thought, it’s short for Hilary.’

2008 is set to be a big year. With appearances at writers’ festivals all around Australia, teaching writing at RMIT, and freelance copywriting, Jordan will be hard pressed to find time to start that second novel. She smiles. ‘The more I have to do, the more I fit in!’

See Chris Gordon’s review of Addition on page 8.

Addition is published by Text Publishing.

This article proudly supported by Copyright Agency Limited.

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Grace Lisa Vandenburg counts. The letters in her name (19). The steps she takes every morning to the local café (920); the number of poppy seeds on her slice of orange cake, which dictates the number of bites she’ll take to finish it. Grace counts everything, because numbers hold the world together. And she needs to keep an eye on how they’re doing.

Seamus Joseph O’Reilly (also a 19, with the sexiest hands Grace has ever seen) thinks she might be better off without the counting. If she could hold down a job, say. Or open her kitchen cupboards without conducting an inventory, or make a sandwich containing an unknown number of sprouts. Grace’s problem is that Seamus doesn’t count. Her other problem is … he does.

READINGS SPECIAL OFFER

Readings is offering Toni Jordan’s new novel Addition for the special price of $24.95 (Normally $29.95).
**This Month’s News**

**Literary news of all kinds, award winners, guest reviewers, Readings offers and promotions.**

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**KIDS’ AWARDS**

Brian Selznick has won the 2008 Randolph Caldecott Medal for *The Invention of Hugo Cabr...* (Scholastic, PB, $25), a 533-page novel that he also illustrated. It’s the first time that a novel has ever won the prize, awarded for illustration.

The Newbery Medal was won by school librarian Amy Schlitz for *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village*, illustrated by Robert Byrd (Candlewick, HB, $29.95).

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**HAPPY 100 TO DE BEAUVIOR**

Need a good reason to look up unread literary classics? Well, if you’ve always meant to read Simone de Beauvoir, this could be the year to do something about it. Celebrations of her centenary last month in France, and will continue throughout the year. De Beauvoir, author of *The Second Sex* and several acclaimed novels, was a pioneering feminist and revolutionary philosophical thinker. Australian biographer Hazel Rowley, author of the biography *Tête à Tête* (a Readings bargain this month), says she hopes that the centenary year will ‘stop people mocking and belittling De Beauvoir’ for her open relationship with fellow celebrity philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. ‘I don’t think we should be trivialising this incredible figure by fixating on lascivious sex.’

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**READINGS GLENFERN FELLOWSHIP**

The Victorian Writers’ Centre are delighted to announce that Jason Cotter has been invited to take up the Readings Glenferrn Fellowship for 2008. The fellowship, which is sponsored by Readings, awards the use of a writer’s studio for one year. Jason will use the fellowship to work on his novel-in-progress, *Little Bit Long Way*. Congratulations Jason!

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**BOOK CLUBS AT PORT**

Justine Douglas will be running a session on book clubs at our Port Melbourne shop in February. Find out everything you need to know about setting up your own book club and hear about our book club program for 2008. We will be distributing starter kits for book clubs and you can enter the draw to win a free set of books for your club. Bookings essential. 6.30pm Monday 11 February Readings Port Melbourne 253 Bay St. Ph 9681 9255.

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**GUEST REVIEWERS**

This month’s guest reviewers include Alice Pung, author of the luminous memoir *Unpolished Gem* (Black Inc, PB, $24.95), who reviews Catherine O’Flynn’s *What Was Lost* on p9. Sybil Nolan reviews Brock Clarke’s *The Arsonist’s Guide to Writers’ Homes* in New England on p10. Malori Ray reviews *The Anatomist: A True Story of Grey’s Anatomy* on p14 and last year’s surprise hit *What I Learned in Architecture School* on p21. The staff of CAE Book Groups have been generous with their time and opinions this month: Sally Keighery reviews *Eating Lilly* on p9, Ingrid Josephine reviews *The Irresistible Inheritance of Wilberforce* on p10 and Vicky Booth reviews *Roy Jacobsen’s Burnt-Out Town of Miracles* on p10. Thanks to all of you!

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**THE NEW LOOK READINGS MONTHLY**

You’ll notice some changes to the Readings Monthly this year – notably, another increase in size, from 28 to 32 pages. The most exciting change, though, is the launch of a new regular feature to promote new and emerging Australian writers, generously supported by the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL). Each month, we will run a double-page interview feature on a book by a new Australian writer that we’re particularly excited about. The features will be written by some of Australia’s finest literary figures: both journalists and authors. And we’ll be making it easy for you, our reader, to engage with the books we feature, by offering them for sale at a Readings special price during the month of promotion.

Our first feature (pages 4-5), written by Sleepers Publishing’s Louise Swinn, focuses on Toni Jordan, whose first book, *Addition* (Normally $29.95, Our special price $24.95) is being touted by her publisher, Text’s Michael Heyward, as his greatest discovery since the first Shane Maloney: Text have already sold rights for the book into several countries, including the UK and the US. It’s a witty, off-beat romance about an obsessive-compulsive counting addict and the surprising repercussions of her chance supermarket encounter.

Next month, award-winning author Alex Miller will interview literary journalist Kevin Rabalais about his debut novel, *Landscape of Desire* (Scribe, March), a riff on the Burke and Wills expedition. We’ll also be doing more smaller features: Q&As with authors and feature reviews.

Look out for Mark Rubbo’s interview with Peter Carey on p7 and our interview with Catherine O’Flynn on p10.

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**CORRECTION, DEC/JAN**

Apologies to guest reviewer Catherine Woods, whose picks of 2008 were erroneously included in the print edition of our newsletter under the name of Malori Ray. This error has also been corrected in our online Best Picks feature.
**February Q&A**

Mark Rubbo talks to Peter Carey about his latest novel, His Illegal Self. Full interview online (www.readings.com.au).

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**Q&A WITH PETER CAREY**

Peter Carey’s new novel, His Illegal Self, set in the late sixties, is about a young American boy, Che, the child of fugitive members of the SDS underground. Che is abducted from his grandmother by Dial, an acquaintance of his mother, and smuggled to Australia. Readings’ Mark Rubbo talks to Peter Carey about the book.

All your novels are quite different from each other. In His Illegal Self, the chief protagonist is a young American boy. Where did the idea for the novel come from?

I began with an American who arrives in south-east Queensland on the run. He thinks he has come to the end of the earth. He has no idea where he really is. This was the starting point. It came from real life but not even that small germ survives in the final novel. For a start, the man has become a woman and is now on the run from something completely different. My first chapter in my first draft is now much later in the work. It’s the scene in which Dial and Che are hitching, walking north beside the Bruce highway, heading into a tropical storm. Almost no cars are going their way. The traffic is all southbound, heading back to Brisbane with headlights burning. In that first draft, I imagined Dial was a single hippie mother with her son.

Obviously I changed my mind, but that’s why novels are such a challenge and a joy. You discover things you never knew, imagined, or experienced. Each day you climb another rung of the ladder. Two years later you have arrived in a high and dizzy place.

The novel is set in the late sixties, in both the US and Australia. The protagonists in the US are hard headed warriors of the left, the Australians are bumbling hippies trying to avoid Bjelke Peterson’s police raids. Was that an intentional contrast?

Fortunately we know each other. You know I am a contrarian and will disagree with almost everything you suggest. However even you, further down the page, describe the American radicals as narcissistic. They are also often strident, and doctrinaire, but they are in their own way also bumbling. One of the characters blows herself up while trying to make a bomb. Generally speaking I was not trying to represent all American radicals in this way, but to represent an interesting thread of the resistance, those who came through Harvard were children of great privilege who, in terms of their political activism, seemed to have little social ease beyond the confines of Harvard Yard. The sort of political adventurism that led to bank robberies and bombings always seemed to me the response of privileged people who could not get their way. In general I don’t disagree with what they wanted.

The Australian hippies in the novel are not political activists in the same way, although you could easily agree, from the vantage of 2008, that they made a political choice, and their choice demanded some courage of them. I don’t mean this to be read as a national trait. When I think of the Australian anti-war movement I am more inclined to think of the young union guy who has coffee with Dial in Sydney, in that scene where she reveals she has no idea that Australia has troops in Vietnam. In other word I think of trade unionists, labour organisers and the younger more middle class left.

This has nothing to do with your new book, but Prime Minister Rudd recently announced a national prize for Australian fiction and non fiction. What are your views of such a prize and what do you think the new government could do for Australian writers?

I think this is a wise, uncontroversial decision. Mind you if I had understood all this earlier I would have been nicer about Nambour, the Prime Minister’s home town. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to set things straight.

I would, first of all, like to thank the clerks at the National Bank in Nambour who always took a long time investigating and conferring before they would give me any money from my savings bank account. Also thanks to the guys with the red noses and yellow shirts who would always remind me that parking was for Day and Grimes customers and only for the period when actually engaged with shopping at Day and Grimes. I know I have suggested that a character in my book shoplifted from Day and Grimes, but would like to reassure the Prime Minister that this character is fictional. I paid cash for everything I bought at Day and Grimes there and did not shoplift once.

Che’s father is a member of a Weatherman type group, who seem narcissistic and indulgent. Is that your view of the left in the US, then? Now?

Absolutely not. It is my view of the characters in my book which is based on my opinionated foreign understanding on a sliver of the student movement against the war. To talk about the American left feels almost quaint. America has gone so far to the right since those years that we can talk about living under fascism without really shocking anyone. Reagan destroyed the unions and now they will have to be rebuilt. The left, generally, will also have to be rebuilt, and that must partly come from a re-invigorated union movement and those young people who understand the real consequences of NAFTA and globalisation.

Wal-Mart will not be happy.

Dial enlists the help of the hippie lawyer Phil Warriner to help her out of her legal predicament; he becomes one of the great comic characters in the novel – his incompetence helps bring the novel to its resolution. How did you think of him?

Phil was sent to me, descending through a propane glare. He was surrounded by white ants, like singing angels, and when he rolled his first joint and the smoke drifted up and clung to his amazing side-burns I knew that he was mine.

On a number of occasions in the novel, you refer to a future that isn’t in the novel. Does that mean you anticipate a sequel, or to give the reader a sense of hope?

There will be no sequel, but yes, there is a future that isn’t in the novel. I wanted to make it clear that this was a whole novel, but not a whole life. If you think about this as a chapter in Che’s life you will conjure fleeting glimpses of a remarkable man.

I imagine you research the time and settings of your novels quite extensively. What was involved in researching for this novel, especially the Sunshine Coast in the sixties?

Well I lived there in the mid-seventies, but of course I went back there when I was writing the book. I was generally disgusting, stayed in a fancy place on the beach on Hastings Street, ate at Saili every day for lunch. I went beyond Noosa, of course, but the dirty little secret is that the world of my book did not exist in the real world of 2006. What you have on the pages of His Illegal Self are nothing but figments, inventions, things I made up based on imperfect recollection and irresponsible invention.

But what a pleasure it was to return to Queensland, to walk on Sunshine beach, to feast on mud crabs and Moreton Bay bugs.

His Illegal Self (Knaup, HB, Normally $45, special price $35.95) is reviewed by Mark Rubbo on p8.

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**SPECIAL OFFER**

Exclusive to Readings: your favourite Peter Carey novels (including last year’s Theft) in Vintage paperback for just $12.95 (were $24.95).
**BOOK OF THE MONTH**

**THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO**

Stieg Larsson

Maclehose Press. PB.

Normally $32.95

Our special price $27.95

Staff review

I know it's only February, but this book is a sensation, and without a doubt likely to be one of the top thrillers of this – or any other – year! It's the first in what is being referred to as the 'Millennium Trilogy', by Swedish journalist Larsson, who apparently tragically died of a heart attack some months after completing the third book in 2004. This translation is the first publication of the Maclehose Press, with ex-Harvill publisher Christopher Maclehose at the helm (who has an uncanny knack for picking some phenomenal Scandinavian writers – like Peter Hoog and Henning Mankell).

But enough of preliminaries – what can I say about this unputdownable book? It gets you in instantly, with a prologue which relates how the 82-year-old Henrik Vanger has received in his mail on the same day for over 40 years a dried flower, always of the most unusual and rare nature. Every year, he informs a retired police detective, for whom it's his last unsolved and most frustrating case.

Next page: the family tree of the Vanger dynasty, whose family company is one of Sweden's most significant industrial entities.

Then enter Mikael Blomkvist, financial journalist and publisher of Millennium, a new current affairs magazine, who has just been convicted of libel as a result of an exposé-gone-wrong of Wennerstrom, another Swedish business tycoon.

These two stories are entwined, as a highly unconventional private investigator, the damaged and angry young computer whiz Lisbeth Salander, is hired to check Blomkvist's character – for Vanger wants him to get to the bottom of the mystery of the disappearance of his 16-year-old niece Harriet at the clan's annual family gathering in 1966. Blomkvist accepts (with the bait of some dirt on Wennerstrom), and moves to a cottage on the family island to start work.

As the case gets more complicated, he teams up with Salander to help him with the research – that is turning into a long and bloody trail of macabre killings that have occurred for decades around Sweden.

This is classic crime fiction – from the tip of a hat to Agatha Christie in the scenario of Harriet's disappearance from Henderby, the family island (which on the day in question couldn't be left), the wonderfully atmospheric location in Sweden's far north, the endearing character of Blomkvist, the marvellous creation that is Salander, and a wonderfully executed playing out of the mystery which enthralled to the very end. And it's not without its serious side – this is also an impassioned social commentary on the author's part both with a wonderful array of characters.

And there Dial and Che begin to find some kind of future together as the early Henning Mankell – and then some!

Martin Shaw is from Readings Carlton

**Note:** The Guardian has described this book as 'a story about what defines us and the steps she takes are all based on defining by numbers. This is not a classic tale of a woman going under because of her obsessive disorder, but rather, a story about what defines us and makes us unique. It is also about a family surviving tragedy and accepting the outcomes. Told with great warmth and humour, Jordan has created a strong female character that needs to confront her demons, accept them and move on. The Melbourne landscape of the novel is marvellous as well. This is a love story without the frills. An enjoyable read all the way through. Chris Gordon is Events Coordinator at Readings Carlton

**EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE**

David Malouf

Vintage. PB. $23.95

David Malouf is a master of the art of the short story. His poetic prose shimmers, as always, in his latest collection – seven stories of bookish boys and taciturn men, strong women and wayward sons, fathers and daughters, lovers and husbands. Malouf’s stories are rich with intricate detail: a reverence for the extraordinary within the ordinary. For those who don’t already know his work, this new collection of short stories provides an ideal introduction, while for those who do, it offers confirmation of a rare and luminous talent.”

**HIS ILLEGAL SELF**

Peter Carey

Knopf. H/B. Normally $45

Our special price $35.95

Staff review

Seven-year-old Che lives with his wealthy grandmother in upstate New York. It's the late sixties and Che's mother and father are members of a radical wing of Students for a Democratic Society, fugitives living underground. Che yearns to be with his mother and when a young woman arrives at his grandmother's New York apartment, he is convinced that this is her. But Dial is just an acquaintance who has been recruited to take Che to meet his mother. When there is a terrible accident, the SDS underground spirit Dial and Che out of the country to Queensland's sunshine coast. There they hide in a hippy commune, outsiders, wanted and unwanted. And there Dial and Che begin to find some kind of future together with a wonderful array of characters. His Illegal Self works on many levels: it is a testament to Carey's supreme skills as a writer. On one level it asks: What did the neophyte radicalism of the American New Left produce?

**Fiction**

**Australian Fiction**

**ADDITION**

Toni Jordan

Text. PB. Normally $29.95

Our special price $24.95

Staff review

We all have our quirks and view of the world that can lead us into trouble, or out. Here, Toni Jordan, first-time local author, has used a romantic framework to explain a particular affliction of the main character. Grace is a counter – everything she sees and does is defined by numbers. The food she eats, the purchases she makes, and the steps she takes are all based on numbers. This is not a classic tale of a woman going under because of her obsessive disorder, but rather, a story about what defines us and makes us unique. It is also about a family surviving tragedy and accepting the outcomes. Told with great warmth and humour, Jordan has created a strong female character that needs to confront her demons, accept them and move on. The Melbourne landscape of the novel is marvellous as well. This is a love story without the frills. An enjoyable read all the way through. Chris Gordon is Events Coordinator at Readings Carlton

**EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE**

David Malouf

Vintage. PB. $23.95

David Malouf is a master of the art of the short story. His poetic prose shimmers, as always, in his latest collection – seven stories of bookish boys and taciturn men, strong women and wayward sons, fathers and daughters, lovers and husbands. Malouf’s stories are rich with intricate detail: a reverence for the extraordinary within the ordinary. For those who don’t already know his work, this new collection of short stories provides an ideal introduction, while for those who do, it offers confirmation of a rare and luminous talent.”

**HIS ILLEGAL SELF**

Peter Carey

Knopf. H/B. Normally $45

Our special price $35.95

Staff review

Seven-year-old Che lives with his wealthy grandmother in upstate New York. It's the late sixties and Che's mother and father are members of a radical wing of Students for a Democratic Society, fugitives living underground. Che yearns to be with his mother and when a young woman arrives at his grandmother's New York apartment, he is convinced that this is her. But Dial is just an acquaintance who has been recruited to take Che to meet his mother. When there is a terrible accident, the SDS underground spirit Dial and Che out of the country to Queensland's sunshine coast. There they hide in a hippy commune, outsiders, wanted and unwanted. And there Dial and Che begin to find some kind of future together with a wonderful array of characters. His Illegal Self works on many levels: it is a testament to Carey's supreme skills as a writer. On one level it asks: What did the neophyte radicalism of the American New Left produce?
Is Bush its legacy? On another, it is a story of love and longing.

Carey is a storyteller who weaves his imagination into tales that speak to us all.

Mark Rubbo is Managing Director of Readings

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PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Geraldine Brooks

HarperCollins. PB. Normally $32.95

Our special price $27.95

Staff review

Pulitzer prize-winning Australian author Geraldine Brooks (March, Year of Wonders) has written another cracker of a book. The central artefact of the book is the so-called Sarajevo Haggadah, a 500-year-old prayer book used at Passover, remarkably illustrated in a time when most Jewish manuscripts did not contain any figurative art at all. Mystery? Now fiction kicks in – in 1992 it was remarkably saved from destruction. Now fiction kicks in and in 1996 Hanna Heath, sassy forthright Australian conservator of medieval manuscripts, is bidden to Sarajevo to repair and document this precious book. She wonders who were the people of the book, the different hands that had made it, used it, protected it? Her forensic samples and scrapings taken from the book lead us there. A butterfly wing takes us to Sarajevo 1940, a silver clasp to Seville 1480. Brooks used her vivid imagination to conjure up these five crucial episodes in the Haggadah’s past history. She is a great storyteller and wears her considerable research lightly. But she is not just an historical novelist. Interspersed is Hanna’s story, a first-person narrative. Not so much mystery as contemporary pacy thriller, in both her personal and professional life. In the Koran, the people of the book were the Jews and the Christians, and indeed people of these three faiths and their interrelationships are at the core of this book. No doubt, in each historical episode, there is much suffering and terrible persecution of the Jews, but ultimately Brooks is very keen to elucidate the fact that the things that people of different religions and ethnicity have in common are stronger than what divides them. A message of hope for our times.

Sally Madsen is from Readings Carlton

EATING LOLLY

Corrie Hosking

Fourth Estate. PB. $27.99

Guest review

Margaret is 18 years old and already pregnant when her parents send her to live in a tumble-down beach shack on a remote island. Alone for the first time in her life she is forced to reinvent her past in order to embrace her future. She renames herself Mumma and begins a relationship with her young neighbour, Mister. Together, she and Mister raise their daughter Lola Belle (Lolly) as their own. Home-cooked meals are the mainstay of this eccentric family unit but as Lolly approaches adolescence her mother’s luxurious food no longer soothes her. Clues to Mumma’s pre-island life inevitably bubble to the surface and Lolly seeks answers. As her daughter’s world begins to unravel, Mumma must confront her own past and reassess the wisdom of decisions she made long ago.

Eating Lolly explores the legacy of long-held family secrets as they play out in the minutiae of domestic life from one generation to the next. Adelaide writer Corrie Hosking was chosen as one of the Sydney Morning Herald’s Best Young Novelists in 2005.

Sally Keighery is Program Coordinator of CAE Book Groups

International Fiction

WHAT WAS LOST

Catherine O’Flynn

Scribe. PB. $24.95

Guest review

Catherine O’Flynn has written a book about very quiet people in the peripheries of society: a neglected little girl, a painfully shy adolescent boy, a black child, a security guard suffering from insomnia. All these people are connected by a past event – the disappearance of a small child from a shopping centre many years ago, who is suddenly showing up on the closed circuit television screens of the centre late at night. This is a story about being lost in large places, being alone in a world peopled with attachments. Like the mall’s labyrinth of unlit corridors with their many twists and unexpected doors, O’Flynn’s plot never veers away from the dark places. With such a strong plot, a less skilled author would probably be inclined to simply make do with a striking story and simple characterisation. But what makes the book extraordinary is that O’Flynn manages to include humour and compassion in such a sad tale. The sheer richness of the characters’ inner thoughts and complexities are written in with careful effortlessness; and the understanding with which the author treats all these misfits only heightens the tension and poignancy of the narrative.

What Was Lost comments on the alienation of a society obsessed with consumerism, but it is never didactic. It is a wonderful read.

Alice Pung is the author of the memoir Unpolished Gem (Black Inc., PB, $24.95)

MONSTER LOVE

Carol Topolserki

Fic Text. PB. $25.95

Bernand and Shelylin are two damaged people who find solace in each other. It is a fiercely exclusive relationship that must be protected at all costs … with terrible consequences when a baby unexpectedly makes three. Carol Topolserki is a psychoanalyst who has worked as a probation officer, rape counsellor and at a shelter for battered women. She is intimately acquainted with the kind of people she writes about here, and it is evident in her deft depiction of the forces that lead a couple to kill their own child.

The story is told from multiple perspectives: their neighbours, work colleagues, families, police, social services, all blending to create a cohesive picture. Fans of We Need to Talk About Kevin will be drawn to this similarly complex psychological novel.

WE ARE NOW BEGINNING OUR DESCENT

James Meek

Text. PB. $32.95

Staff review

I think I want to know more about James Meek. I, like many others, loved his wonderful Siberian thriller The People’s Act of Love. His new novel seems to be based on his career as a foreign correspondent in the Middle East, in the years 2001-2. Descend’s main character is 37-year-old Adam Kellas, a war reporter in Afghanistan, whose take on the conflict between Taliban and mujahadeen is cynical – his employers are only really interested in the American ascendancy (with photos and stories to match). What he wants is out – in particular to return to writing fiction. But as his earlier attempts sold poorly, Kellas plans to follow the path of first-rate poet friend and become rich by writing a popular mass-market thriller. The events of 9/11 intercede, however, robbing him of the essence of his plot line: ‘it hadn’t occurred to Kellas that men might find it easier to sell their thrilling, unlikely narratives to the masses by asking armies of believers to perform them than to vend their imaginations at airport bookstalls in the accepted fashion’. He changes tack and a year later has produced an arch satire that will still appeal to the action-hungry American masses, even as it ridicules them and their government’s foreign policy. But, even with a million-dollar book contract, there are complications: he’s causing havoc amongst his left-wing London friends, who he accuses of chardonnay socialism;
Q&A WITH CATHERINE O’FLYNN

Catherine O’Flynn has won widespread recognition for her first novel What Was Lost (reviewed p9), including longlistings for the Booker and the Orange. She is in Australia this month for the Perth Festival. Jo Case spoke to her.

I love your central character of Kate Meaney, the decidedly quirky ten-year-old detective who avoids loneliness by creating her own world. How did you come up with her?

I think sometimes in literature, and certainly in the media, children are treated just as ciphers, symbols of innocence or victims. I really wanted to make Kate a three dimensional character that readers might relate to as much, if not more, than any adult character. In creating Kate I thought back to the kind of person I was when I was ten, which I suppose was the kind of person many of us were back in our childhoods – burning with energy and ideas and constantly embarking on slightly ill-conceived and elaborate projects.

There’s not a false note in the narrative – every action makes sense within the context of the character. When writing What Was Lost, did the characters or the story come first?

The starting point was a child lost in a shopping centre – that grainy image on the CCTV – so the first two characters were Green Oaks itself and Kate, everything else developed from there.

You have grown up in a sweet shop and worked in record stores, as a mystery shopper and as a teacher. How have you drawn on all of these experiences for this book?

I suppose parts of all those and other experiences I’ve had leak into the book in obvious or less obvious ways. I spent a lot of my childhood behind the counter of my dad’s sweet shop and I think there’s just something inherently humorous about the world of confectionery. The other great thing about that and working in record stores were the opportunities they gave me to watch customers and to speculate outrageously about them. I was only a mystery customer for about two days, and so the voice in the book isn’t the result of any in-depth research – I just liked the idea of a foul-mouthed, depraved madman making meticulous notes on standards of service.

The sinister characters in this book don’t match the wild imaginings of Kate and Adrian, who draft sordid motives (murder, robbery) onto the sweetshop customers to amuse themselves. Instead, the sinister things people do are more insidious, less dramatic, aren’t they?

Yes, life is rarely as dramatic as it is in books like ‘How to be a Detective’ or episodes of Columbo. This was a great disappointment to me when I was a child and like Kate (though less consummately professional) tried to spot crime in my neighbourhood. To my immense frustration, nothing remotely clandestine ever happened. That’s what I thought anyway – I’m sure plenty of sinister stuff was going on behind people’s curtains and eyes.

It seems that the generic expectations of what a modern life should be grind down many of the characters in What Was Lost – particularly Lisa, the depressed record store (assistant) manager. Is this something you’ve observed or experienced?

I think I observed it more than experienced it myself. What interested me really was the contrast between the child full of ideas and projects and direction, and the adult who seems to have lost their way. I think we all, at some point or another, find ourselves in jobs, or relationships or lives that we didn’t intend perhaps because of expectations of what a modern life should be, or often just through drifting aimlessly. I wanted to look at characters who have sleptwalked into lives they don’t want and what it takes to wake them up.

SALTWATER FISHING IN THE TROPICS

and Astrid, an American journalist he met and fell in love with in Afghanistan, urgently wants to see him ... This is intense stuff, with the personal very much the political, and a meditation, too, on the role and value of literature: is it just to entertain, or to transmit ideas? Does it suffice to be good? Maybe it is an idea of our world that fiction seldom ventures into ... and makes me consider Meek surely one of the most interesting of contemporary novelists.

Martin Shaw is from Readings Carlton

AN ARSONIST’S GUIDE TO WRITERS’ HOMES IN NEW ENGLAND

Brock Clarke

Tent. PB. $32.95

AN ARSONIST’S GUIDE TO WRITERS’ HOMES IN NEW ENGLAND

Who is this serial arsonist burning down the historic homes of late great American authors? Official suspicion falls on Sam Pulsifer, who as a teenager accidentally burnt down the home of Emily Dickinson, with fatal consequences. Sam, the novel’s narrator, would have us believe he is a normal young, white, middle-class man, who has done his time and is being unfairly targeted by malign forces. To the unwary reader, it initially seems that author Brock Clarke is exploiting an original premise for yet another darkly ironic study of youthful male alienation in America ... but the plot soon thickens. Clarke understands the humour of desperation: he repeatedly produces lines about love, literature and the contemporary human condition that make you think ‘Aha!’. Yet despite its wit, An Arsonist’s Guide is often uncomfortable reading, mainly because the author does an outstanding job of sustaining Sam’s rather gloomy, whiny voice. Brock Clarke is a talent to watch out for.

Sylf Odd is a freelance writer and editor.

THE IRRESISTIBLE INHERITANCE OF WILBERFORCE

Paul Torday

Orison. PB. Normally $32.95

Our special price $27.95

This moving novel by Norwegian author Roy Jacobsen unfolds against the background of the Battle of Suomussalmi, when the Finnish army – silent, white-clad figures on skis – defeated the Russians against massive odds. It is early December 1939 and Suomussalmi is due to be burnt to the ground in the face of the advancing enemy. The villagers have evacuated, but (because there’s always one) Timo Vatanen, logger and ‘village idiot’ refuses to budge. He alone greets the Russians in the wasteland of soot and frozen ice left by the burning. Forced to provide wood for the Russian army, Timo finds himself the unlikely leader of a small band of misfits struggling to survive physically and mentally in the ‘white hell’ of the Finnish winter. These men are technically his enemies, but they all face a common death. Doggedly, he sets about saving their lives and restoring their identities whilst...
teaching them to log the frozen forest. The Burnt-Out Town of Miracles, told mainly from Timo’s unflinching point of view, chronicles the behaviour of ordinary people in an extreme world. It leaves the reader with a haunting sense of the beauty and cruelty of both nature and man.

Vicky Booth is Program Administrator of CAE Book Groups

MATTER
Iain Banks
Orbit. PB. Normally $35
Our special price $29.95
Staff review

Djan Seriy Anaplian is an agent for the Culture’s Special Circumstances, a section charged with anonymous interference in the lives of civilisations throughout the galaxy. On assignment, word reaches her of the death of her father, ruler of the Sarl, denizens of the eighth level of the ancient Shell World of Sursamen. Abandoning her post to return home, she is unaware of the intrigue taking place and the use to which she will have to put her training. Ferbin otz Aesh-Hauskt, heir to the throne, is in hiding, announced dead by the scheming Regent who now rules in the stead of his and Djan’s younger brother. Aided by a loyal, if somewhat disgruntled servant, he journeys to reach the surface in hope of contacting his sister. Far-future-flung, pan galactic, witty, and deeply satisfying, Banks’ tale may well be alien in every witt, and deeply satisfying, Banks’ tale may well be alien in every world, with contemporary themes to fi ction novelists, his story is rich in hope of contacting his sister. If somewhat disgruntled servant, rules in the stead of his and Djan’s younger brother. Aelsh-Hausk’r, heir to the throne, is in hiding, announced dead by the scheming Regent who now rules in the stead of his and Djan’s younger brother. Aided by a loyal, if somewhat disgruntled servant, he journeys to reach the surface in hope of contacting his sister. Far-future-flung, pan galactic, witty, and deeply satisfying, Banks’ tale may well be alien in every witt, and deeply satisfying, Banks’ tale may well be alien in every

BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN
Charles Bock
John Murray. PB. $32.99

Newell Ewing is 12 years old when he goes out for the night with a friend in Las Vegas, never to return. While his distraught suburbanite parents each unravel under the pressure of their grief, other events from the same night reverberate through the lives of a host of disparate characters. The ‘urban nomads’ who populate this book include a comic book illustrator on a debaucherous weekend, a band of misfit runaways, a bubbly Wiccan teenager and a stripper who imagines her life as scenes from a movie. ‘Beautiful Children careers from the seedy to the beautiful, the domestic to the epic, all with huge and exacting heart.’ – Jonathan Safran Foer

FRIDAY NIGHTS
Joanna Trollope
Bloomsbury. PB. Normally $32.95
Our special price $27.95
Staff review

The ever-popular Joanna Trollope is back, with a winning novel celebrating the power of female friendship. Are friends the new family? For these six very different women, ranging in age from early twenties to early seventies, they just might be. It’s Eleanor who starts the Friday nights. She spots two plainly lonely women, each struggling alone with small children, from her window, and decides – on a whim – to invite them in. Now, the women

The Irresistible Inheritance of Wilberforce
Paul Torday

Even the finest wine can leave a bitter aftertaste… Chronicling the vintage years of Wilberforce’s life, this is a dazzling, haunting story of obsession and addiction, of loyalty and betrayal — and lots of wine. The brilliant new novel from the bestselling author of Salmon Fishing in the Yemen.

Going Gray
Anne Kreamer

In searching for the balance between attractiveness and authenticity, Kreamer’s journey of middle-aging illuminates in an entertaining way the politics and the personal costs of this generation’s definition of ‘aging gracefully’.

The Low GI Family Cookbook
Jennic Brand-Miller et al

Delicious, easy-to-prepare low GI meals the whole family will love that is beautifully illustrated and backed by the best-selling, world-renowned New Glucose Revolution team. This comprehensive cookbook presents one hundred recipes designed to provide a healthy balance for breakfast, lunch, dinner and any snacks in between.

Bleeding Kansas
Sara Paretsky

Sara Paretsky’s new stand-alone novel is a stunning exploration of the lives of ordinary people, affected by events over which they have no control, and a searing portrait of the backbone of the United States of America as it is today.
Books

THE FEDERATION PRESS

Indonesia: Law and Society
Tim Lindsey - editor

Indonesia has undergone massive political and legal change as part of its post-Suharto reform process and its dramatic transition to democracy. Indonesia: Law and Society covers a broad range of legal fields and includes both historical and very up-to-date analyses and views on Indonesian legal issues. This edition has been completely revised, with 27 new chapters. It includes work by 31 leading scholars from a wide range of countries. There is still no comparable, English language text in existence.

ISBN 978 1 86287 665 6 RRP $99.00

Climate Law in Australia
Tim Bonyhady and Peter Christoff - editors

This book provides the first extended account of Australia’s new climate laws. The book examines the pivotal issues in Australian climate law and policy: the Kyoto Protocol and its alternatives, emissions targets, carbon trading, geo-sequestration, nuclear decision-making, adaptation to climate change and legal liability. It examines the leading cases: Hazelwood power station, Armit Hill, Xstrata and Bowen Basin coal mines, and the Bald Hills and Tandilga wind farms. Climate Law in Australia shows how climate law has grown in Australia over the last few years - and how far the law still has to go.

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On Chesil Beach
Ian McEwan

Vista. PB. Normally $24.95
Our special price $19.95

A student’s increasingly erratic dispatches over 27 days comprise this obsessive first novel by Bernhard (1931–1989), published to European acclaim in 1963. An unnamed medical student is sent from Vienna by his supervisor, an eminent surgeon named Strauch, to undertake ‘precise observation’ of the surgeon’s brother, a famous painter who has suddenly left the city for the ‘dismal’ village of Weng.

Poetry

Revolution Days: Selected Poems
David Malouf

UQP. PB. $26.95

From the groundbreaking Bicycle and Other Poems to the bestselling Typesetter Music, Revolving Days is a resplendent, up-to-the-minute selection by one of Australia’s most distinguished poets. Malouf’s best poems remain among the finest examples of the Australian lyric. An essential compendium.
THIS NIGHT’S FOUL WORK
Fred Vargas
Harvill. PB. Normally $32.95
Our special price $27.95
Staff review
Does my enthusiasm for the Larsson book elsewhere in these pages mean I have to withhold myself with this one?! Well, sorry – this is an absolute beauty too! Vargas is practically a household name in her native France. It’s almost unbelievably that we’re not equally crazy about her in the English-speaking world. Her characters are fantastic: Inspector Adamsberg with his unconventional Zen-like methods and problematic love life; wine-swalling Danglard, his oh-so-methodical counterpart, who finds his colleague a perpetual nightmare – but loves him to death, too! Vargas, a practising archaeologist before she turned to crime writing, is here in her familiar territory – some ‘regular’ murders that don’t look quite right and lead to forensic investigation, a macabre slaying of a deer, a disturbed grave, a ‘haunted’ house from the eighteenth century. But really, what one is reading Vargas for is her wonderful ability to paint pen portraits of people, to capture somehow the essence of their lives in a manner we don’t expect from a conventional police procedural. Beyond that there is the loving portrayal of the quirks and idiosyncrasies of (especially regional) France, and a particular delight in describing realms of knowledge that the average person has never thought about before. Funny, poetic, philosophical, clever – and absolutely compulsive.
Martin Shaw is from Readings Carlton

BLEEDING KANSAS
Sara Paretsky
Headline. PB. Normally $32.99
Our special price $27.95
Staff review
Taking a break from her V.I. Warshawski novels, Sara Paretsky has written a novel dealing with contemporary issues, and their effect upon the lives of ordinary Americans in present-day Kan-
sas. The world of Bleeding Kansas is haunted by the past, and the bloody wars once fought between pro- and anti-slavery settlers. It is also a place of stark religious values, where God’s will is not questioned, and outsiders are viewed with suspicion. So when Gina Haring, a divorced New Yorker, arrives to rent an empty farmhouse, the community is wary of her. A free-thinker and a practitioner of witchcraft, Gina creates tensions which are exacerbated when the Schapen family finds a perfect red heifer in their dairy. Taking it as the fulfillment of an obscure religious prophecy, and believing Jesus’s return to earth is now imminent, the heifer’s presence, coupled with ideological conflict over the war in Iraq, brings the community’s tensions to breaking point. The result is a climax all-too-in keeping with Kansas’s bitter, explosive past.
Judith Lorentie is from Readings Hawthorn

A QUIET FLAME
Philip Kerr
Quercus. PB. $24.95
Staff review
I must admit to being completely partial on the subject of Philip Kerr’s books; I thought his The One From The Other (Quercus, 2006) was one of the best crime books I’d ever read, up there with The Hound of the Baskervilles and The Murder of Roger Ackroyd. A Quiet Flame picks up where it left off, with Bernie Gunther arriving in Argentina, where he has been forced to flee after being framed as a Nazi war criminal. Having convinced the Argentine president, Juan Peron, of his true identity, Gunther finds himself recruited to solve two brutal murders. Two teenage girls have been found murdered, and the case bears a striking similarity to one Gunther investigated years earlier in Berlin. The murderer was never caught, and there seems every reason to believe he may now be on the loose in Argentina. But taking on the case unleashes a can of worms that cuts right to the heart of Peron’s brutal dictatorship, and Gunther finds himself set for another hair’s-breadth escape from death. Here’s hoping there’ll be plenty more Bernie Gunther mysteries to come! JL

GARDEN OF EVIL
David Hewson
Macmillan. PB. $32.95
Staff review
A beautiful art expert from the Louvre is found dead in an art studio hidden in the lanes and alleys of Rome. Beside her, an ageing pickpocket is also dead, both of them in front of an unknown Caravaggio masterpiece. What do these individuals have in common and what does it have to do with this beautiful painting? These are the questions plaguing Nic Costa in this latest offering from David Hewson. His investigations and those of his team will take him centuries into the past, to when the painting was created and to the twisted men who worshipped it in secret. Will Nic be able to find the incontrovertible evidence needed to charge and convict one of Rome’s most prominent citizens? Join with him in this thrilling, twisted tale of the darker side of the Roman aristocracy.
Sharon Nebel is from Readings Hawthorn

APPEAL
John Grisham
Century. HB. Normally $49.95
Our special price $39.95
In a crowded courtroom in Mississippi, a jury returns a shocking verdict against a chemical company accused of dumping toxic waste into a small town’s water supply, causing the worst ‘cancer cluster’ in history. The company appeals to the Mississippi Supreme Court, whose nine justices will one day either approve the verdict or reverse it. The chemical company is owned by a Wall Street predator named Carl Trudeau, and Mr. Trudeau is convinced the Court is not friendly enough. With judicial elections looming, he decides to try to purchase himself a seat in the Court.

MR WONG GOES WEST
Nury Vittachi
Adit. PB. $22.95
The world’s biggest and most expensive aircraft is about to make its maiden flight, and CF Wong has been called in to ensure the plane’s feng shui is up to scratch. When a man is murdered on board, Mr Wong is delighted he can charge a premium to alleviate the extra negative energy. He’s also been appointed to figure out whether the miseries of the British Royal Family are simply a result of bad feng shui, so things are looking profitable. But Wong and his irrepressible assistant, Joyce, soon become embroiled in solving the murder.

THE GOOD HUSBAND OF ZEBRA DRIVE
Alexander McCall Smith
Abacus. PB. $23
Mma Ramotswe is experiencing staffing difficulties. First Mr. J.L.B. Mate-koni asks to be put in charge of a case involving an errant husband. But can a man successfully investigate such matters? Then she has a minor falling-out with her assistant, who decides to leave the agency. Along the way, Mma Ramotswe is asked to investigate a couple of tricky cases.
Non-fiction

Biography

THE ANATOMIST
Bill Hayes
Scribe. PB. $32.95

Guest review

The anatomy textbook written by Henry Gray, with stunning engravings by Henry Vandyke Carter, was first published in 1858. Never out of print since, now in its 37th edition, available in a dozen-plus languages with an estimated five million in sales, it is a classic text for generations of medical students. Curiously, little is known of author and artist, Why? Hayes addresses the puzzle from the perspective of Carter’s personal journals—the only source to describe the context of the textbook. What emerges is a portrait of a highly committed anatomist-artist, struggling with depression and an ambivalent family background. Carter used journals to self-castigate, to turbulent ends. To introduce his childhood, early relationships and family history, he uncovered a long-forgotten secret he had hidden even from himself. This unique book about one man’s quest for intimacy and peace with the past reveals a lot about the psychology of men and relationships. Men will recognise a part of themselves in it; women will find rare insight into what makes men tick.

BEFORE YOU MET ME
Alan Close
Random. PB. $34.95

Novelist Alan Close decided, at the age of 43, to find out why he couldn’t seem to stay in a relationship. Delving into his childhood, he uncovered a long-forgotten secret he had hidden even from himself. This unique book about one man’s quest for intimacy and peace with the past reveals a lot about the psychology of men and relationships. Men will recognise a part of themselves in it; women will find rare insight into what makes men tick.

BEIJING CONFIDENTIAL
Jan Wong
HarperCollins. PB. $32.99

Staff review

Jan Wong, a Canadian foreign correspondent, not only lived in Beijing at the height of the Cultural Revolution as a young Maoist (she studied at the Beijing University), but she was also a foreign correspondent there between 1988 to 1994. Much of that period is covered in her earlier memoir, Red China Blues. The latest memoir, Beijing Confidential, is more intimate. During her study at Beijing University, Jan Wong befriended a classmate, Yin Luoyi, who expressed a desire to go to America. Jan Wong shopped her friend to the Authorities for being disloyal and that was the last she saw of her. Now, after many years, much has changed in Wong’s life (and in China), and she goes in search of Yin. She has witnessed much in her time as a correspondent and grown away from her early ideology—and China has left its Communist past behind and embraced capitalism. Wong is able to entertain us with much statistical information; for instance, the biggest Ikea shop outside of Sweden is in Beijing and home ownership has increased from zero to 70 per cent. Mobile phone penetration in Beijing is almost at 100 percent, making it very difficult to find someone after 30 odd years. But it is through this journey that Wong finds out more about herself, the city she has come back to and the friend she once betrayed. Wong’s journey is at times frustrating because of its enormity but at the same time quite personal. Beijing Confidential is a timely and apt addition to the many books now available on modern China as the world focuses on Beijing as the Olympics approach this year.

THE DRESSMAKER’S DAUGHTER
Kate Llewellyn
HarperCollins. PB. $32.99

Lovers of good writing will enjoy this exquisite memoir from one of Australia’s best-loved authors. Kate Llewellyn, author of The Waterlily, traces her life from her Eyn Peninsula childhood to her nursing training, marriage, life in bohemian Adelaide in the 60s and 70s, her time as an art gallery owner, and the beginning of her journey as a writer. Combining striking honesty with the elegant prose of a poet, her self-portrait reveals her life in various shades of light and dark, beautifully evoking the times and places she writes about.

AN EXACTING HEART:
THE STORY OF HEZIBAH MENUHIN
Jacqueline Kent
Viking. HB. $49.95

Hepzibah Menuhin was, like her more famous brother Yehudi, a musical prodigy. Thrust onto the stage by a calculating, controlling mother, she was on the brink of greatness aged 17, both as musical partner to her brother and in her own right. But, to everyone’s surprise, she left her career behind to marry a Victorian grazier and move to Australia. In her new country, she threw herself into humanitarian projects and raised two sons. Eventually, she resumed performing, to international acclaim. Sixteen years later, she left it all behind—husband, children, career—to reinvent herself, once again seduced by a new love. Jacqueline Kent looks at the consequences of possessing great talent—and the pleasures and pitfalls of gambling for high emotional stakes.

GOING GRAY
Anne Kreamer
Little Brown. HB. $40

A quirky, revealing book at our society’s obsession with youth—and growing old (dis)gracefully. Anne Kreamer always figured she was a ‘youthful’ 49, until one day she splied a photograph of herself with her teenager daughter and realised that her brassy dyed hair didn’t look as good as she’d imagined. It led her to wonder why she, and everyone she knew, unquestioningly dyed their hair rather than let it grow gray. What followed was a thoughtful, often surprising investigation into the hair-care industry and the way that marketing has led to the norms we now follow, and into the effect of gray hair (read: a bold sign of ageing) on potential love interests and employers. Gutsy and insightful: an original and intriguing read.

RESISTANCE:
A CHILDHOOD FIGHTING FOR EAST TIMOR
Naldo Rei
UQP. PB. $34.95

Naldo Rei was just six months old when Indonesia invaded East Timor in December 1975. After his father was murdered for his work in the resistance movement, nine-year-old Naldo joined the clandestine resistance and began his own extraordinary journey fighting for East Timor’s freedom. Throughout his teenage years, Naldo was regularly imprisoned and tortured. Eventually, in too much danger to remain in his homeland, he escaped to Indonesia and then Australia for several years. Now living in an independent East Timor, Naldo can tell his incredible story.
TO THE CASTLE AND BACK
Vaclav Havel
Portobello. PB. $49.95
Vaclav Havel was president of Czechoslovakia (and the nascent Czech Republic) for 14 years. In that time, he was responsible for leading central Europe out of communism, and here he writes candidly about the peculiar life of a statesman and his lack of readiness for the surreal challenges of governing a young democracy. He also reflects on the EU, the US as world superpower, and the war in Iraq. Infused with characteristic charm and humour, this illuminating memoir provides a valuable insight into contemporary Europe.

Politics
RECONCILIATION: ISLAM, DEMOCRACY AND THE WEST
Benazir Bhutto
Simon & Schuster. PB. $34.95
Completed just days before her assassination on December 27, 2007 at an election rally at Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Recomniciation is former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto’s clear-eyed assessment of the nature of Pakistan’s relationship with the West, with Islam and with extremism. In this important new book, Ms Bhutto demonstrates that extremism is not inherent to Islam, but that various factors, including some policies of the West, have empowered Islamic fundamentalists and are responsible for the current battle for the hearts, minds and bodies of the Umma (the Islamic nation around the world).

DAUGHTER OF THE EAST
Benazir Bhutto
Simon & Schuster. PB. $24.95
The recently slain former Prime Minister of Pakistan tells the story of her life in this revised and updated version of her autobiography (2007). From her upbringing in one of Pakistan’s richest families, the shock of the contrast of her Harvard and Oxford education, and subsequent politicisation and arrest after her father’s death, Benazir’s life has been full of drama. First published in 1988, updated to cover her own activities since then and how her country has changed since being thrust into the international light after 9/11, this is an inspiring tale of strength, dedication and courage in the face of adversity.

THE NEW ROME
Cullen Murphy
Scribe. PB. $27.95
The rise and fall of ancient Rome has always been a metaphor for America, but here Cullen Murphy ventures past the obvious, bringing the brutal colours of Rome and the complexities of today’s USA together in this beautifully written, intelligent and hugely readable book. He explores how the two populations saw their political elites, and the irreligious cultures of Washington and Rome. He looks at the consequences of military overstretch and the widening gap between military and civilian society. Pressingly, he argues that America most resembles Rome in the burgeoning corruption of its government and arrogant ignorance of the world outside.

BLOOD AND SOIL MODERN GENOCIDE 1500-2000
Benedict Kiernan
MUP. PB. $50
A groundbreaking, important new book from one of the world’s leading authorities on genocide and crimes against humanity. Ben Kiernan has been deeply involved in the study of these subjects for 30 years, and played a key role in unearthing confidential documentation of the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge. His writings have transformed our understanding not only of 20th-century Cambodia but also of the historical phenomenon of genocide. Here, he examines outbreaks of mass violence from the classical era to the present, identifying connections, patterns and features that in nearly every case gave the warning signs of the catastrophe to come. In Blood and Soil, Kiernan urges that we heed the rich historical evidence with its telltale signs for predicting and preventing future genocides.

Australian History
VAN DIEMEN’S LAND
James Boyce
Black Inc. HB. $49.95
Almost half of the convicts who came to Australia came to Van Diemen’s Land. There they found a land of bounty and a penal society, a kangaroo economy and a new way of life. In this book, James Boyce shows how the convicts were changed by the natural world they encountered. Escaping authority, they soon settled away from the towns, dressing in kangaroo-skin and living off the land. Behind the official attempt to create a Little England was another story of adaptation, in which the poor, the exiled and the criminal made a new home in a strange land. This is their story, the story of Van Diemen’s Land. ‘The most significant colonial history since The Fatal Shore. In re-imagining Australia’s past, it invents a new future.’ – Richard Flanagan

TRUE STORIES: HISTORY, POLITICS, ABORIGINALITY (1999 BOYER LECTURES)
Inga Clendinnen
Text. PB. $19.95
In 1999, Inga Clendinnen delivered six lectures as part of the Boyer Lecture series. In those lectures, she declared that democratic people need true stories about their past; stories that catch the experience of different individuals in different situations. Here, the reader catches those different experiences in fragments: a woman being manhandled on a beach, an old man remembering the hard lessons of his boyhood in a Jesuit mission, an old woman urgently dancing the history of her country – and it is given a frank and challenging review of race relations in Australia.

History
A HISTORY OF HISTORIES
John Burrow
Allen Lane. HR. $59.95
Staff review
In this literally epic volume, John Burrow has given himself the task of writing the first attempt in English to chart not only the histories that make up the great narrative(s) of the western world, but also the history of their writing. History isn’t only written to chronicle the past, it is also an effort in making the present remember something in particular, to assert that this something should not be forgotten – a sort of historico-political intervention, if you like. And so, as well as bringing to life the histories of the great historians (which he does splendidly), Burrow wants to drill in and understand what exactly it was about their living situation that made that version so important to write, and, moreover, why we still now think that there is something in this history that matters to us.

Burrow argues that the world we inhabit is largely the product of not what has gone before, but of how that history has been written, re-read, or forgotten. Both an introduction then, and a tour of historiography; this is also a great way to read the history of the west. Burrow’s writing is elegant and lively; what could be so dry in others’ hands is lovingly brought to life here. A pleasant reminder of all those great books I’m dying to read again!

Andrew Cornish is Manager of Readings Carlton

GOD’S CRUCIBLE: ISLAM AND THE MAKING OF EUROPE 570-1215
David Levering Lewis
WW Norton. HB. $40.95
It’s trite, but true, to say that an understanding of the past is essential to an understanding of the present. Since 9/11 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, a basic understanding of Islam and the Middle East has
Nature and the Human Soul
A road map to discovering our place in the world (Bill Plotkin)
This landmark book - the result of 25 years’ work - encourages us to connect personally with the natural world and reassess our place in it. Wilderness guide and former psychology professor Bill Plotkin offers a practical integration of personal and spiritual understandings that will allow us to transform our culture. RRP $29.95

Love is Not For Cowards
How understanding your past can transform your relationship (Birgit Weber)
Love is Not For Cowards is a book about daring to love - daring to share out inner feelings and thoughts with our partner without worrying about their reactions. On the challenging journey of love and self-exploration, this insightful book is a valuable companion. RRP $24.95

Up Downs
A fun and practical way to introduce reading and writing to children aged 2-5 (Michelle M Neumann, illustrated by Kaye Forster)
The Up Downs’ approach makes it fun for parents and children to share time reading, singing, moving and playing. Including songs, beautifully illustrated stories, imaginative activities and an alphabet book all in one, Up Downs is a wonderful introduction to reading and writing. RRP $29.95

The Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Creative Non-Fiction
Lee Williford & Michael Martone (eds)
Touchstone. PB. $34.95
This indispensible anthology unites 50 very different pieces from very different writers, all of them excellent examples of the burgeoning genre of ‘creative non-fiction’. There are memoirs, journalism, cultural criticism and personal essays, drawn from 1970 to today; from writers such as David Sedaris, Barbara Kingslover, David Foster Wallace and Amy Tan. A fantastic resource for students of writing – and a pleasure to browse for readers of all kinds.

Journals
SLEEPERS ALMANAC 4
Louise Swinn & Zoe Dattner (eds)
Sleepers Publishing. PB. $24.95
Staff review
Just a few days before deadline for this issue of the Readings Monthly, we received a finished copy of the new SLEEPERS ALMANAC – the fourth such anthology of new short fiction from those young publishing dynamos Zoe Dattner & Louise Swinn. And first up – how beautiful an object is it! Dattner tells us the cover is based on the floral motif from her couch – nice couch – but whatever, it looks a treat, and the new smaller format makes the volume so much more tactile than in the past. In terms of content, there are a number of established authors both from Australia and abroad with pieces – Steven Carroll, Tony Wilson, Max Barry, Sean Condon, Will Eaves and John Burnside all contribute – but the really exciting thing (one hopes!) about anthologies such as these are the new and emerging writers (the ‘lesser-known equals’, as the editors nicely put it), and of the four or five I read in recent days, not one didn’t leave me with wide-eyed wonderment at the talent on display (and there’s even an ex-Readings staffer to boot.) So for this collection of over 35 stories I can only say: savour and enjoy.

Staff review
Dakuresort
A week’s writing workshop wrapped up in a holiday in Fiji
March 9 –16 2008 Novel Writing
With Kathryn Heyman
Intensive daily workshops which will get your novel going – with a one-on-one 'novel surgery' tutorial for every participant.

June 1 – 8 2008 Memoir – Finding the story
With Patti Miller
A week of exploring how to translate the rich texture of lived experience into a vivid, engaging memoir. Exercises to awaken original memory, to find and clarify your unique voice, and to identify the narrative shapes in the jigsaw of memory.

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www.dakuresort.com

The very best essays from Vidal’s 50-year writing career come together in this brilliant, wide-ranging book. Courageous, outrageous, and searingly intelligent, these pieces explore literature, US politics, showbiz, sexuality and modern manners. From the fiction of Calvino and Updike to the Clinton and Bush administrations, and a damning indictment of post-9/11 politics, this is a masterful examination of our times.
GRANITY 100
William Boyd (ed.)
Granta. PB. $24.95
This special hundredth anniversary edition of one of the world's leading literary magazines is headlined by guest editor William Boyd, and boasts an impressive rollcall of contributors. Names include Nobel Prize winner Doris Lessing, Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, A.M. Homes, Ian McEwan and Nicholas Shakespeare.

GRIFFITH REVIEW 19: REIMAGINING AUSTRALIA
Julianne Schultz (ed.)
ABC. PB. $19.95
A new government; a new Australia. That's the theme of the latest Griffith Review. The essays here predict the big trends that will shape our nation and look at a history that is innovative, progressive and adaptable. The lead essay, by leading young legal thinker George Williams, addresses the dynamic nature of Australia, its stories, history and legal framework, and considers how this could change.

Food & Wine
FEAST BAZAAR
Barry Véra
Murdoch. PB. $39.95
A colourful journey through the culture and customs of three of the most intriguing countries in the world. In this vibrantly illustrated companion book to the author's acclaimed food/travel series of the same name, chef Barry Véra gets to the heart of Indian, Moroccan and Syrian cuisine. This book includes over 90 delicious recipes, information about traditional cooking methods, personal anecdotes, and cultural and historical observations.

Garden
READING THE GARDEN
Katie Holmes, Sue Martin & Kylie Mirmohamadi
Miegunyah. PB. $36.95
Whether a small plot in the backyard of an inner-urban home or a capital city's sprawling botanic garden, Australians have long desired a patch of dirt to plough or enjoy. Reading the Garden explores our deep affection for gardens and gardening and illuminates their numerous meanings and uses, from European settlement to the late twentieth century. The act of garden-making has helped migrants create 'home' and identity in a new place; we continue to use our outdoor landscapes to preserve the memory of a loved one, feed the family or beautify our surrounds.

Parenting
CONSUMING INNOCENCE
Karen Brooks
UQP. PB. $34.95
This down-to-earth, accessible look at the effects of popular culture on family life is timely indeed. Never has debate been so lively on the complex relationship between kids of all ages and pop culture, with the furore about corporations advertising to kids, the sexualisation of children, and the dubious impact of celebrities like Britney, Paris and co. Consuming Innocence explores these issues in a sensible, non-sensationalist way, without laying blame. It is grounded in comprehensive research, but delivered in a conversational tone, with commonsense advice. Brooks considers the role of celebrities, fads, technology, fashion, school, the media and parents in creating children's ideas of themselves – and shows how parents and other concerned adults can educate themselves about popular culture and the messages it gives.

God's Crucible
Islam and the Making of Europe, 570 – 1215
David Levering Lewis
In this panoramic history of Islamic culture in early Europe, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian reexamines what we once thought we knew. This book provides a new interpretation of world-altering events whose influence remains as current as today's headlines.

Solutions for the World’s Biggest Problems
Edited by Bjørn Lomborg
New from The Skeptical Environmentalist comes this survey of twenty-three of the world's biggest problems, with an assessment of the costs and benefits of their solution. Lomborg's results will provoke debate - particularly amongst climate change advocates. PLUS download software to compare your results to Lomborg's and join in the global debate.

The Israel-Palestine Conflict
Second Edition
By James L. Gelvin
As President Bush makes a last-ditch attempt at its resolution this award-winning and balanced study of the conflict has been updated to incorporate recent developments. A must read for anyone wanting to know more about the historical background or key issues in the conflict and the main obstacles to peace.

GREAT SUMMER READING AVAILABLE NOW FROM UQP

CONSUMING INNOCENCE: Popular Culture and Our Children
KAREN BROOKS

February 2008 | $34.95 | Non-Fiction | 336pp

RESISTANCE: A Childhood Fighting for East Timor
NALDO REI

February 2008 | $34.95 | Non-Fiction | 352pp

DOING ANGER DIFFERENTLY
Michael Currie
MUP PB $34.95

Michael Currie has worked with adolescent boys and their families for 20 years. His Doing Anger Differently Program takes an innovative new approach to the widespread problem of aggression in boys – one that can be adopted by parents and teachers alike. Currie explains that the explosive outbursts and monosyllabic exchanges typical of aggressive adolescent boys are expressions of the way these boys understand and misunderstand events. His approach allows parents and others to take a key role in shaping these boys’ understanding of their world. Doing Anger Differently presents a set of clear, practical principles, illustrated with case studies.

WINNICOTT
Adam Phillips
Penguin. PB $24.95

D. W. Winnicott’s remarkable books, are still read, valued and argued with over 30 years after his death. This book, by the author of Going Sane, is an elegant, thoughtful attempt to get to grips with a writer, paediatrician and psychiatrist whose work with children and mothers (and the wider implications their relationship has for all of us) continues to be profoundly relevant and fascinating.

REVOLVING DAYS
Selected Poems
DAVID MALOUF

February 2008 | $26.95 | Poetry | 216pp

JOIN DAVID MALOUF FOR A JOURNEY THROUGH HIS LIFE IN VERSE.

REVOLVING DAYS is a resplendent, up-to-the-minute selection from one of Australia’s most distinguished poet. From his first published poetry in 1970 through to his bestselling 2007 volume Typewriter Music, read the very best of David Malouf’s poetry.

Environment

THE HOT TOPIC: HOW TO TACKLE GLOBAL WARMING AND STILL KEEP THE LIGHTS ON
Gabrielle Walker & David King

Bloomberg. PB $29.95

Most of us, at least here in Australia, are convinced that global warming poses a great threat, not only to our way of life, but to our continued existence. But what can we do about it, at home and in government? Sir David King is the UK government’s Chief Scientific Adviser and the man credited with persuading Tony Blair to act on climate change. Here, he collaborates with science writer Gabrielle Walker to present a clear, concise explanation of the problem we face and what we can – and should – do to tackle it.

HOW GOOD ARE YOU?: CLEAN LIVING IN A DIRTY WORLD
Julian Lee
Random. PB $24.95

Climate change. Water shortages. The nuclear debate. Battery hens. Child labour. Our world is full of ethical minefields, many of them posing questions about how we can live our lives while minimising our negative impact on the planet. Julian Lee takes a witty, lively tour of the main stakeholders in the drive for better living in Australia, from fast-food franchisees and organic farmers to ethical investors and fair-trade gurus. Along the way, he establishes how every one of us can make a difference.

Psychology

REVOLUTION IN MIND: THE CREATION OF PSYCHOANALYSIS
George Makari

MUP. PB. $45

This brilliant new book offers a definitive history of Freud and his disciples – and the birth of one of the modern age’s most influential movements. Beginning with great changes in late nineteenth-century science, medicine and philosophy, Makari traces the field’s diverse intellectual influences and the fascinating characters who shaped its formation until 1945. He reveals how psychoanalysis survived the schisms between Freud and his followers (who all eventually fell away) and gained wide acceptance in Europe, only to be banished with the onset of fascism and World War II. ‘George Makari has written nothing less than a history of the modern mind.’ - Paul Auster
What are the consequences of these conspiracies of silence? This book looks at a variety of examples, from the domestic (families that avoid discussing a member's cancer) to the political (the military's 'don't ask, don't tell' policy). Zerubavel pinpoints the normative and political underpinnings of silence and denial, and shows that silence is usually more intense when there are more people conspiring to maintain it.

**THE LITERACY WARS**
Ilana Snyder
A&U. PB. $32.95

Debates over how children are taught to read and write have grown increasingly urgent in recent years. Confidence in the abilities of teachers has dwindled and many now believe there is a literacy crisis in our schools. Is there? Ilana Snyder explains what lies behind the often bitter disagreements between the critics who want to reclaim the old ways of teaching literacy and the educators in favour of creative change. It's a divide that effects government policy and funding. Drawing comparisons with the UK and the US, *The Literacy Wars* shows how the debates in Australia resonate with similar battles in other parts of the world.

**BETTER: A SURGEON’S NOTES ON PERFORMANCE**
Atul Gawande
Picador. PB. $23.95

A surgeon at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and an assistant professor at the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Atul Gawande succeeds in putting a human face on controversial topics like malpractice and global disparities in medical care, while taking an unflinching look at his own failings as a doctor. Critics appreciated his candour, his sly sense of humour, and his skill in examining difficult issues from many perspectives. He conveys his message – that doctors are only human and therefore must always be diligent and resourceful in fulfilling their duties – in clear, confident prose. Most critics' only complaint was that half of the essays are reprints of earlier articles. Gawande's arguments, by turns inspiring and unsettling, may cause you to see your own doctor in a whole new light.

**THE STORY OF FRENCH**
Jean-Benoit Nadeau & Julie Barlow
Henry Holt. PB. $25.95

Now in paperback. The first history of one of the most beautiful languages in the world, this groundbreaking book charts the origins of the French language and its progress around the globe.

**THE EARLY YEARS: THE LYRICS OF TOM WAITS**
Tom Waits
HarperCollins. HB. $45.95

Known for his growling vocals and the distinct poetry of his lyrics, Waits has amassed a devoted following over the course of three decades. This work collects the lyrics – formative and classic – from the first ten albums of this true bard of hard living.

**ALL OF US**
Michel Lawrence
Scribe. HB. $59.95

Staff review

Michel Lawrence has done us a diversity that makes Australia great. This project of recording the people that make up Australia and setting out to photograph at least one person from every nationality that now calls Australia home is a beautiful record of all those people and the diversity that makes Australia great. Michel Lawrence has done us a great service; his book belongs in every home to inspire us.

**THE PARIS REVIEW INTERVIEWS VOL. TWO**
Philip Gourevitch (ed.)
Text. PB. $34.95

The first edition of *The Paris Review’s* interviews with writers attracted wide critical acclaim. These seemingly simple Q&A style interviews, drawn from the journal’s beginnings in 1953 to recent times, have elicited invaluable observations on the craft of writing from some of the world’s greatest practitioners of the art. (For example, William Faulkner’s comment that writing is ‘99% talent … 99% discipline … 99% work.’) Introduced by Orhan Pamuk, this book features Toni Morrison, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Graham Greene, James Baldwin and more.

**Photography**

Photographer Michel Lawrence was horrified by the images of the Cronulla riots where Anglo-Australians stood off against Lebanese Australians. This wasn’t the Australia he thought he lived in; so he set himself a project to record the Australia he wanted, a tolerant, accepting and diverse society united by a common dream – to be Australian. He decided that he would record the people that made up Australia and set out to photograph at least one person from every nationality that now calls Australia home.

**Music**

The Early Years: The Lyrics of Tom Waits

*Readings Summer Sale*

Up to 50% off selected books, DVDs & CDs. Limited stock.

And 20% off all fiction and kids books. Our summer sale starts Saturday February 16 at all five Readings shops. Hurry in!
**BEYOND SACRED**

Howard Morphy, Nick Waterlow, Colin Laverty & Judith Ryan

Hardie Grant. HB. $120

A comprehensive, visually stunning survey of recent Aboriginal art. Ranging across Western Australia and the Northern Territory, from the well-known art centres of Papunya and Utopia to the lesser known communities of Maningrida and Bidyadanga, this book tells the story of Aboriginal art and its growing presence in the contemporary art scene. Strikingly illustrated and lavishly produced, the book features more than 250 paintings and drawings. Works are featured from internationally renowned artists such as Rover Thomas, Emily Kngwarreye and John Mawurndjul, as well as from newer discoveries such as Alma Webo and Christine Yukenbarri. It is a major survey of contemporary Aboriginal art in Australia and will inspire the experienced collector and novice alike.

*Margaret Snowden is Art & Design Buyer at Readings Carlton*

**MURAKAMI**

Takashi Murakami, Dick Hebdige, Midori Matsu, Scott Rothkopf, Mika Yoshitake, Paul Schimmel & Lisa Gabrielle Mark

Rizzoli. HB. $395

Takashi Murakami is one of contemporary art’s most innovative and important figures. Drawing from street culture, high art, and traditional Japanese painting, Murakami takes the contemporary art trend of mixing high and low to an unprecedented level (critics call him the new Warhol), producing original paintings and sculptures as well as mass-produced consumer objects such as toys, books, and most famously, a line of handbags for Louis Vuitton. The publication of Murakami coincides with the first major retrospective of the artists’ work.

**RENAISSANCE SIENNA: ART FOR A CITY**

Xavier Salomon et. al

Yale University Press. HB. $110

Sienna flourished as a major artistic centre during the Italian Renaissance, fuelled by the patronage of powerful and wealthy families, and the results were remarkable for their virtuoso beauty and strong sense of civic identity. This is the first major book in English to showcase a breathtaking and diverse range of masterpieces and discuss in depth how art was shaped and sustained to provide a unique artistic language for Sienna – prior to the city’s possession in 1557 by Cosimo de Medici of Florence, its cultural and political rival.

**QUILTING, PATCHWORK & APPLIQUÉ: A WORLD GUIDE**

Caroline Crabtree & Christine Shaw

Thames & Hudson. HB. $75

A beautiful and comprehensive guide to textiles and techniques from around the world. The book is divided into three main sections – materials, uses and construction. Covering household items and clothing to ritual and ceremonial objects, the book contains a stunning collection, with over 500 illustrations, a glossary, bibliography, an index and advice on how to care for such pieces.

**VERTICAL GARDENS**

Anna Lamberti

Thames & Hudson. HB. $120

Bringing nature into urban environments has always been a challenge for metropolitan areas. One of the most spectacular solutions to this problem is the vertical garden. These gardens are more than just an unusual decoration attached to a wall – they are a means of bringing life and greenery to a bleak courtyard, a grey city street, or a cold modern building. The first publication to present a collection of the most important examples of this emerging trend includes work by Patrick Blanc (Quai Bramley Museum Plant Wall & Genoa Aquarium Plant Wall), Herzog & de Meuron (Prada Aoyama Epicentre Tokyo) and artists Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey, who have temporarily transformed various architectural spaces using grass as an aesthetic material.

*Spectacular indeed! MS*

**SO FAR: THE ART OF DALE FRANK, 1980-2005**

Frank Dale

Black Inc. HB. $199

This spectacular new book traces a trajectory in the work of Australian artist Dale Frank, considering his early performance artworks of the 1970s and early 1980s and themes that emerged in his work of the mid-1990s onward. It tracks the idea of performance in his work, culminating with a discussion of his most recent paintings. It includes instances of his large-scale drawings, ‘social sculpture’ performance works and ‘Varnish Paintings’. This is a magnificent career retrospective monograph, notable for its high production values and the new light it sheds on one of Australia’s leading painters.

**101 THINGS I LEARNED IN ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL**

Matthew Frederick

MIT. HB. $21.95

Guest review

This A5 illustrated handbook is exceptional among hardcover architecture books for two reasons: it is lucid and it is cheap. It has short, straightforward advice immediately applicable for students, practitioners and educators. There are tips for drawing (how to draw a line, 1), presentation (roll your drawings facing out to help them stay flat, 90) and sanity (manage your ego, 86). There are explanations on theory (sense of place, 9; parti, 15; decorated shed, 95) and history (traditional architecture, 60). Pencil sketches and pen diagrams illustrate each of the 101 things, clarifying concepts unspoken but assumed throughout architecture school and beyond. Frederick addresses architects as designers, prioritising the emotional experience of buildings. This shows in the selected signature quotes from celebrity architects (Lotus Kahn, 8; Mies van der Rohe, 61) and random unsubstantiated hypotheses (69) on reality (23), beauty (51) and zeitgeist (83). Frederick – architect, urban planner and teacher – has produced an architecture handbook wonderfully evocative of architectural studios by the boxroom hardcover (card used to make building models) and sketch of different pen-thicknesses (style used to indicate object thickness or hierarchy).

Maloti Ray is a freelance reviewer

**Travel Wrap**

by Kate O’Mara

The success of the Wallpaper and Luxe guides has obviously inspired a few niche travel guide publishers to throw some product out there. The latest mob is US publisher Authentik who, if their newly released art, shopping and dining guides to Paris and London go well, will be showering us with more guides to more places over the coming year.

Britain’s reliable and practical Automobile Association have several new guides due over the coming weeks, including some of their handy CityPack book and map combos. These guides may look a little unexciting, but they actually have a lot of interesting things in them and their maps are just about the best in the business. Last, but not least at all, Lonely Planet have a shiny new edition of one of their most popular tomes, *Italy*, coming out this month along with new editions of London, Venice, Shanghai and Sydney.
STONE KEY: THE OBERNEWTN CHRONICLES BOOK 5
Isobelle Carmody
Viking. PB. $32.95

Staff review
It has been a long eight-year wait for the latest installment in Isobelle Carmody’s Obernewtyn series and ... it was worth it. The Stone Key, number five in the six-part series, is a chunky, involved read for teens (and those of us who started reading these books 20 years ago!) It continues Elspeth, the heroine’s, journey through the post-apocalyptic land to grant freedom to her people and save mankind. So you know, light summer reading. This installment is a great read though, seeming more considered and driven than the last. Carmody writes passionately, empowering and engaging readers and does not fail the loyalty of her fans. Savour this one and hopefully, next year will see number six on our shelves. Callie Martin is from Readings St Kilda.

INDIGO GIRLS: GIRLFRIEND FICTION 2
Penny Russon
A&U. PB. $14.95

MY LIFE AND OTHER CATASTROPHES: GIRLFRIEND FICTION 1
Rowen Mohr
A&U. PB. $14.95

Staff review
These are the first two titles in a new series published in collaboration by Allen and Unwin and Girlfriend magazine and designed to help teenage girls discover the joys of reading. In The Indigo Girls two very different teenagers, members of a trio of families who have been camping at the same spot for years, find themselves thrown together when the third family have to come later. Zara is super glamorous, the down-to-earth geeky one. The story unfolds through their two voices as each worries about their lives, their families and wanting the friendship to work. ‘The voices are authentic, the plot gripping and Penny Russon has created a lovely sense of place with minimum wordage. My Family and Other Catastrophes, written in diary form, is full of teen angst and passion. Erin is trying to cope with her parents’ split and her mother’s new man, who Erin refers to as the Creepazoid, and who is, horror of horrors, the PE teacher at her school. Likeable, totally over-imaginative and self-obsessed, Erin’s struggles, and those of her fellow members of the school musical, will be enjoyed and identified with by much of its intended audience. The publisher’s suggested reading age for the series is 13 to 16, though I suspect ‘cool’ pre-teens will enjoy these two as well. Kathy Kozelowski is from Readings Carlton.

THANK YOU BEAR
Greg Foley
Viking. HB. $19.95

Sometimes a box is just a box. Sometimes it is much much more. That is what Bear thinks. But not everyone agrees. Until Bear finds someone who sees it differently. Sometimes finding a friend who sees things as you do is the greatest gift of all. An evocative story of true friendship, heartrendingly illustrated.

AIRMAN
Eoin Colfer
Puffin. PB. $19.95

An airborne action adventure from the bestselling author of Artemis Fowl. Conor Broekhart was born to fly. Or more accurately, he was born flying. Little wonder he became what he became. In an age of discovery and invention, many dreamed of flying, but for Conor flight was more than just a dream, it was his destiny. In one dark night on the island of Great Saltee, a cruel and cunning betrayal destroyed his life and stole his future. Now Conor must win the race for flight, to save his family and right a terrible wrong.

NOODLE PIE
Ruth Starke
 Omnibus. PB. $16.99

Meeting relatives for the first time isn’t easy. When they speak a different language and seem to be greedy and impatient and, worst of all, run a pretty crummy restaurant, it’s the pits. For Andy and his dad – a former refugee returning home for the first time – Vietnam is full of surprises. A fresh perspective on multicultural families.

MINTON GOES SAILING
MINTON GOES DRIVING AND TRUCKING
MINTON GOES UNDERWATER & HOME AT LAST
Anna Fienburg (illus. Kim Gamble)
A&U. PB. $12.95

Minton the salamander loves adventure – especially in things that go. Turtle is always worried that things will end in disaster ... but he’s along for the ride, anyway. These engaging, colourful re-issued picture books from the creators of Tashi are perfect for small children who, like Minton, are fascinated with things that go.

ARE YOU FOR WHEEL?: MOST AMAZING CARS EVER
Tony Davis
Random. PB. $14.95

Burgeoning rev-heads and fact lovers alike will love this enthusiastic guide to the weirdest – and most wonderful – inventions from the world of motoring. These cars are made from materials as odd as plastic and bamboo ... and some are as small as knee-high, while others are as long as a bus. Read about the car with one wheel and the car that was powered by a fan. Also available: You Must Be Skidding (Tony Davis, Random, Normally $14.95, Our special price $7.95).

NOTES FROM THE TEENAGE UNDERGROUND
Simonne Howell
Pan. PB. $16.95

Staff review
When a truly great book happens along, it makes itself known in subtle ways. Copies go missing from libraries, people get outraged, life plans are changed. And this year’s Inky’s winner is one. It is an evocative, powerful book. A dangerous, truthfull book. A book that empowers, challenges and makes the world that little bit warmer. It is a book that reminds me why I work in the book industry. It is a juicy story about three girls who dare to spend their summer chasing a dream. Andy Warhol is their guide and they aim to be avant-garde, to lose their virginity, to live a little. Notes is also an elegy to the tenuous relationship between mother and daughter, the power of art and sheer difficulty of being yourself. Read it; it’s worth it. (And please don’t steal it!) CM

KAITO’S CLOTH
Glenda Millard (illus. Gaye Chapman)
Scholastic. PB. $14.99

Winter is drawing near and Kaito’s butterflies have died. She weeps, but the Lord of Flight explains that although butterflies must come and go, flight itself will last forever. So Kaito finds a way to experience the magic of flight - and honour the beauty of her butterflies - even in the middle of winter.

KIDS’ NEWS
Let’s face it: awards for most kids’ books are not chosen by the intended audience. Well, the 2007 Inky’s, by the State Library of Victoria’s Centre for Youth Literature, were different. The CYL picked ten Australian and ten overseas titles published in the last financial year and put them on their website (insideadog.com.au), asking teenagers to vote for their favourite. They had over 6000 votes. The winners were Golden Inky (Australian): Notes from the Teenage Underground, Simmone Howell, Pan, PB, $16.95 AND Silver Inky (overseas): Looking For Alaska, John Green, Harper, PB, $16.
**Readings Famous **

**Bargain Table**

**BARGAINS ON THE WEB**
Our new bargain books are regularly added to our website. Just click on the Bargains tab at www.readings.com.au.

**OUT STEALING HORSES**
Per Petterson. PB. Was $27.95. Now $12.95
Winner of the 2007 IMPAC award, this Norwegian novel is a wonderful coming-of-age story.

**CASA MORO: THE SECOND COOKBOOK**
Sam & Sam Clark. HB. Was $39.95. Now $33.95
An impressive quality and diversity of recipes influenced by Spain and the Muslim Mediterranean from the chefs of the famous Moro Restaurant in London.

**THE ZANZIBAR CHEST: A STORY OF LIFE, LOVE AND DEATH IN FOREIGN LANDS**
Aidan Hartley. HB. Was $39.95. Now $16.95
This stunning memoir of war, colonialism and cross-cultural adventure (set in post-colonial and contemporary Africa) follows two generations of Englishmen in Africa, combining memoir with journalism. Bewitching, engrossing and illuminating.

**DAVID GOLDER**
Irene Nemirovsky. PB. Was $32.95. Now $14.95
The second novel by the author of Suite Française. A chilling and brilliant portrait of the frenzied capitalism of the 1920s.

**TETE A TETE: THE LIVES AND LOVES OF SIMONE DE BEAUVIOR AND JEAN PAUL SARTRE**
Hazel Rowley. PB. Was $27.95. Now $12.95
The first dual portrait of these two colossal figures and their intense, often embattled relationship.

**THE ESSENCE OF STYLE**
Jean DeJean. HB. Was $42.70. Now $16.95
Writing with great elan, one of the foremost authorities on seventeenth-century French culture provides an account of how, at one glittering moment in history, the French under Louis XIV set the standards of sophistication, style, and glamour that still rule our lives today.

**COLOSSUS: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE**
Niall Ferguson. PB. Was $27.95. Now $13.95
Acclaimed historian Niall Ferguson ranges across the entire history of America’s foreign entanglements and delves into all the dimensions of American power: military, economic, cultural, and political.

**PERSEPOLIS: THE STORY OF A CHILDHOOD AND THE STORY OF A RETURN**
Marjane Satrapi. PB. Was $49.95. Now $19.95
Now in one volume. Marjane Satrapi’s brilliant memoir-in-comic-strips about growing up in Iran during and after the Islamic revolution

**STORIES AND POEMS FOR EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT CHILDREN OF ALL AGES**
Harold Bloom (ed.). HB. Was $46.75. Now $15.95
Here are old favourites by beloved writers of children’s literature, as well as works by Melville, Tolstoy, Whitman, and Whitman.

**TIME BITES: VIEWS AND REVIEWS**
Doris Lessing. HB. Was $46.95. Now $17.95
In this collection of the very best of Nobel Laureate Doris Lessing’s essays, we are treated to the wisdom and keen insight of a brilliant writer.

**CONCISE GASTRONOMY OF ITALY**
Anna Del Conte. PB. Was $39.95. Now $14.95
A concise paperback edition of a classic book that includes all the information of the original.

**JESUS AND YAHWEH: THE NAMES DIVINE**
Harold Bloom. HB. Was $42.70. Now $15.95
Prolific literary critic Bloom tackles the characters of the Jewish and Christian gods: what god do we meet in Hebrew Scripture? Who is the Jesus of the New Testament, and does he bear any relation to the Jesus most people worship? Does, for that matter, the Hebrew Yahweh resemble the first person of contemporary Christians’ Trinity?

**THE NATURE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT**
Mary Renault. PB. Was $25. Now $12.95
Mary Renault peels off layers of wishful thinking to reveal the real Alexander beneath.

**THE TWELVE CAESARS**
Suetonius. PB. Was $25. Now $12.95
The Twelve Caesars, covering the Roman rulers from Julius Caesar to Domitian, remains one of the richest and most fascinating of all Latin histories.

**THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION**
John Williams. HB. Was $350. Now $29.95
This easily accessible collection of primary source material includes drafts of the Constitution, memoranda, personal letters relating to the drafting, and comments by the drafters themselves. It contains Hansard extracts, speeches, resolutions from Australian Federal Conventions and comments on the drafts. It also reproduces newspaper cartoons reflecting popular feeling at the time. A magnificent volume!

**VOYAGE AND LANDFALL: THE ART OF JAN SENBERGS**
Patrick McCaughey. HB. Was $59.95. Now $19.95
Renowned critic and art historian Patrick McCaughey traces Senberg’s journey, his development as an artist and his distinctive interpretation of the Australian landscape.

**NOW $14.95**
Irene Nemirovsky. PB. Was $32.95. A chilling and brilliant portrait of the frenzied capitalism of the 1920s.

**NOW $16.95**
Aidan Hartley. HB. Was $39.95. This stunning memoir of war, colonialism and cross-cultural adventure (set in post-colonial and contemporary Africa) follows two generations of Englishmen in Africa, combining memoir with journalism. Bewitching, engrossing and illuminating.

**NOW $39.95**
Marjane Satrapi. PB. Was $49.95. Now in one volume. Marjane Satrapi’s brilliant memoir-in-comic-strips about growing up in Iran during and after the Islamic revolution.
SICKO
$29.95. Director: Michael Moore.
Release date: 6.02.08
America’s health care crisis doesn’t only affect the uninsured; others who dutifully pay their premiums often get strangled by bureaucratic red tape as well.

THE BEAST
$34.95. Director: Walerian Borowczyk.
Release date: 6.02.08
A black comedy of sexual manners set around an arranged wedding, with an infamous final scene featuring the titular Beast.

U CARMEN
$34.95. Release date: 6.02.08
Georges Bizet’s Carmen is revisited in this contemporary version set in a modern-day township in South Africa, in a thrilling synthesis of African culture and classic European opera.

ANGEL-A DIRECTORS SUITE EDITION
$29.95. Director: Luc Besson.
Release date: 6.02.08
As he is about to launch himself from the Pont Neuf, Andre notices an impending suicide. With just 24 hours to spare, the mysterious Angela leads him on a life-changing mission.

TALES OF ORDINARY MADNESS
$29.95. Director: Marco Ferreri.
Release date: 6.02.08
Follow Charles Bukowski’s alter-ego in his sordid, hard drinking travails through the seedy flophouses, bars and whorehouses of 70s LA. Special features include The Films of Marco Ferreri.

BAD TIMING
$19.95. Release date: 6.02.08
Set in 70s Vienna, it’s the story of an erotic entanglement between psychoanalyst Dr Alex Linden (Art Garfunkel) and the beautiful, dissolve Milena Flaherty (Theresa Russell). Inspector Netusil (Harvey Keitel), is assigned to untangle the sordid affair when Milena is hospitalised in suspicious circumstances.

DVD OF THE MONTH
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN
$34.95. Director: Kay Pollack.
Release date: 13.02.08
After suffering a breakdown, a successful conductor rediscovers his love of music through coaching a church choir.

VALENTINE’S DAY IDEAS
ONCE LIMITED EDITION
$44.95. Director: John Carney.
Release date: 6.02.08
A musical gem about a Dublin street musician’s collaboration with a pretty Czech pianist. Special features: The Swell Season CD, commentaries and featurettes.

LA VIE EN ROSE
LIMITED EDITION
$44.95. Director: Olivier Dahan.
Release date: 6.02.08
Piaf’s life was a battle: to sing, survive, and love... no regrets. Special features include CD soundtrack, documentaries, deleted scenes.

MANUAL OF LOVE
$24.95. Director: Giovanni Veronesi.
The mysterious nature of love is chronicled through four intertwining episodes, each one played out by a different couple.

ALPHA DOG
LIMITED EDITION
Our special price $24.95.
Director: Nick Cassavetes.
Johnny is double-crossed by another dealer, things spiral out of control and an impulsive kidnapping leads to a shocking conclusion.

FAITHLESS
$29.95. Director: David Vann.
Release date: 6.02.08
With just 24 hours to save his beautiful wife, a man learns to damn his soul.

TAPOUT
$29.95. Director: Michael Polish.
Release date: 6.02.08
A Hong Kong hitman is hired by his boss to kill his wife. But the hitman is struggling with郁 the pain of seeing his family killed by the mob.

ROMANCE AND CIGARETTES
$39.95. Director: John Turturro.
Release date: 13.02.08
A down-and-dirty musical set in the world of working-class New York tells a story of a husband’s journey into infidelity and redemption.

BLACK SHEEP
$39.95. Director: Jonathan King.
Get ready for The Violence Of The Lamb! When inept environmental activists release a mutant lamb from a laboratory onto a farm, thousands of sheep are turned into bloodthirsty predators.

UNDER THE SKIN
$24.95. Director: Carine Adler.
Release date: 6.02.08
When a family tragedy shatters her precarious world, beautiful, impetuous young Iris embarks on a chilling journey of promiscuous self-discovery, and self-annihilation.

BARTALI: THE IRON MAN
$29.95. Release date: 13.02.08
In 1948, when the Italian Communist Party leader is nearly assassinated, the Prime Minister asks retired cycling star Gino Bartali to help by winning the Tour de France.
AN ITALIAN ROMANCE
$34.95. Dir: Carlo Mazzacurati. Release date: 06.02.08
Set in Tuscany in 1936, Giovanni and Maria first met as teenagers. A chance encounter leads to an affair, but the complications of their personal lives begin to take their toll on the relationship.

THE ART OF TRAVEL
$24.95. Director: Alain de Botton
A philosophical look at the ubiquitous but peculiar activity of travelling ‘for pleasure’, that dares to ask what the point of travel might be – and modestly suggests how we could learn to be less silent and guilty miserable on our journeys.

A FEW DAYS IN SEPTEMBER
$29.95. Director: Santiago Amigorena. Release date: 13.02.08
French secret service agent Irene (Juliette Binoche) is on a mission to help an old spy see his children one last time. But she is trailed by a bizarre hit man who makes constant calls to his psychoanalyst.

BREAKFAST ON PLUTO
$34.95. Director: Neil Jordan. Release date: 06.02.08
A wonderfully surreal tale to bring us this funny, moving account of a young man enduring the trials and tribulations he faces with a smile and unwavering faith in the inherent goodness in us all.

JACK KEROUAC: KING OF THE BEATS
$19.95. Release date: 6.02.08
A moving chronicle of the great beat poet’s life, from Catholic boyhood to his self-destructive demise at the age of 47.

DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD
$149.95
These are the seismic moments in history: human tragedies, scientific breakthroughs or era-defining events that have profoundly affected the world. Contains 11 discs and over 30 hours of compelling viewing.

PALIN’S NEW EUROPE
$79.95. Release date: 6.02.08
By road, rail, river, sailboat and donkey through some of Eastern Europe’s most mouth-watering locations, Michael journeys through a Europe reborn, full of unexpected and forgotten delights.

TIDELAND
$34.95. Director: Terry Gilliam. Release date: 06.02.08
After her mother’s heroin overdose, Jeliza-Rose is taken from the big city to a rural farmhouse by her father. Her increasingly odd behaviour includes communicating with Barbie doll heads and a beekeeper veil-wearing Dell.

FATELESS
$34.95. Director: Lajos Koltai. Release date: 06.02.08
Based on the Nobel Prize-winning novel by Imre Kertész, about his experiences as a 14-year-old deported from Budapest to the Nazi labour camps during the Holocaust.

THE NOTORIOUS BETTIE PAGE
$34.95. Director: Mary Harron. Release date: 06.02.08
Gretchen Mol stars as Bettie Page, one of the world’s first sex icons, whose fetish photographs made her the target of a Senate investigation into pornography.

BAD TIMING
A sensual odyssey from filmmaking firebrand Nicholas Roeg

UNDER THE SKIN
“Samantha Morton is extraordinary.” – Entertainment Weekly

TALES OF ORDINARY MADNESS
Adapted from the cult novel by Charles Bukowski

JACK KEROUAC: KING OF THE BEATS
The life and times of the revolutionary writer!
Mild Themes
Infrequent mild coarse language

Bartali
Arguably the greatest Italian cyclist in history.

GIRO D’ITALIA
1936
GIRO D’ITALIA
1937
GIRO D’ITALIA
1946

TOUR DE FRANCE
1938
TOUR DE FRANCE
1948

While famous for having won the Giro D’Italia and Tour de France before, and after the war, this feature length drama also tells the tale of his heroism that took place in the firing line. And importantly for passionate cycling fans, there’s plenty of material focusing on his rivalry with Fausto Coppi, the young buck who challenged him.

Italian cycling history has many great tales, but this is arguably the greatest of them all.

THE SOPRANOS SEASON 6: FINAL EPISODES
$84.95. Release date: 13.02.08

Last year, Tony Soprano cheated death. While Tony muses about his second chance at life, he faces a myriad of stress-inducing crises and comes to doubt the allegiances of those closest to him. The clock is ticking. Time is running out. But for who?

THE LINE OF BEAUTY
$29.95. Release date: 6.02.08

Adapted from Alan Hollinghurst’s Booker Prize-winning novel and set during the hedonistic 1980s, it crawls deep under the skin of Thatcher’s Britain.

THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA
$29.95. Release date: 6.02.08

Naveen Andrews stars as an Anglo-Indian teenager growing up in 1970s suburban London. Both amusing and disturbing, this story of sexual and political awakening is adapted from Hanif Kureishi’s bestseller.

TWO FAT LADIES
$24.95. Release date: 6.02.08

The Two Fat Ladies tour Britain on their vintage Triumph Thunderbird, exploring traditional cooking and hearty meals for a generation tired of restrictive diets and supermarket blandness.

THE VICAR OF DIBLEY: A HOLY WHOLLY HAPPY ENDING
$29.95

Dawn French dons her cassock and collar once more for two very special final episodes of one of the BBC’s most popular comedies.

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS
$19.95. Release date: 6.02.08

Journey back to prehistory to walk, race, swim and fly with mankind’s distant ancestors – and see evolution unfold before your eyes! Walking With Beasts and Walking With Monsters also available at $19.95 each.

TURBO VOLUME ONE
$39.95

While the whole world knows about Inspector Rex, Italy’s own canine detective is lesser known ... until now! Travel with us to Tuscany, the home town of Detective Inspector Luca Sepe, and his border collie named Turbo. Enjoy four feature length crime-solving feature films that have screened on SBS.

JEEVES AND WOOSTER COMPLETE THIRD SERIES
$34.95. Release date: 6.02.08

Episodes include Safety in New York, Bertie Ensures Bicky Can Continue to Live in Manhattan, Cyril and the Broadway Musical.

LA PIOVRA SERIES 5
$49.95

Superintendent Corrado Cattani is dead. After his lover, the beautiful judge Silvia Conti, recovers somewhat from the shock of his death, she decides to take vengeance and carry on his long standing battle against the Mafia.

TIME LIFE’S LOST CIVILIZATIONS
$49.95

Never before could you get this close to seven thousand years of history. Dazzling spectacles recreate rituals and events, from the bloodletting of Maya kings and a pharaoh’s last journey to the secret pleasures of a Roman empress.

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Never before could you get this close to seven thousand years of history. Dazzling spectacles recreate rituals and events, from the bloodletting of Maya kings and a pharaoh’s last journey to the secret pleasures of a Roman empress.
New from Hopscotch

GREEN WING
Discover the surreal and whacky world of Green Wing — a brilliant UK comedy from the makers of Smack the Pony with an all-star line-up including Tamsin Grieg (Black Books). 3 disc-set with extras out Feb 6. $39.95

HUSTLE SERIES 1
From the makers of Spooks and Life on Mars comes the slick and sexy Ocean’s Eleven-style’ BBC drama about a group of con artists. 2-disc set with extras. Screened on ABC TV. Out 6 Feb $29.95

BOYNTON BEACH CLUB
An hilarious and touching film that celebrates growing old, this is a delightful comedy about embracing life and finding love at any age. Out 20 Feb $39.95

BEYOND THE GOLDEN COMPASS
A documentary which delves deep into the otherworldly realm of the best-selling fantasy novel and feature film — The Golden Compass. OUT NOW $29.95
New Release CDs

CD OF THE MONTH
JUKEBOX
Cat Power
$24.95 standard. $29.95 deluxe
À la The Covers Album of 2000, Jukebox covers tracks by musical legends such as Nina Simone and James Brown. This is the first album Cat Power, aka Chan Marshall, has made with her band the Dirty Delta Blues and, as with the last album (The Greatest), it sees a departure from the gritty, alt-country sound of old. Diehard Cat Power fans will probably shake their heads and ask: ‘what happened to the queen of sad core?’ This is still music for broken hearts and lonely wanderers, but with a cleaner, more stylised blues-soul edge. There are lots of surprises on this album. It opens with a down-beat version of Frank Sinatra’s New York New York, then slides into the Hank Williams honky tonk classic Ramblin’ Man. Ms Marshall sings her way through Silver Stallion (The Highwaymen) and I Believe in You (Bob Dylan) with her usual whiskey and cigarettes voice. She joins legendary ladies Billie, Janis and Joni with covers of Don’t Explain, Woman Left Lonely and Blue, all of which are stand-out tracks. The deluxe edition comes with a fetching silver foil gatefold cover and five bonus tracks. Esther Van Duurum is from Readings Carlton.

SPECIAL FEATURE
NEW ALBUMS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2008
There are plenty of records to keep everyone interested this year.

Apart from those reviewed on these pages, coming in late February are new albums from: My Disco, Goldfrapp, Jack Johnson, Lior, Sia, Magnetic Fields. A Philip Glass/Leonard Cohen joint production, Book of Longing, is being performed at the Adelaide Festival this year.

Expected in March are albums from Melbournean Laura Jean (and a confirmed in-store on Friday March 6); Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds; Billy Bragg’s first new album in six years; Daniel Lanois returns with Here is What is (and dare we hope for another in-store!); Shelby Lynne and The Black Crowes.

We have less definite dates on plenty of others – but we are anticipating new albums from a number of Readings favourites in the next six months or so, including: Gillian Welch, Martha Wainwright, M’Ward, Death Cab For Cutie, Camille, Isobel Campbell, Morrissey, Roxy Music, the Avalanches, Kings of Convenience, the Breeders, Portishead, Blur, the B-52s, Aimee Mann, Coldplay, India Arie, Doves, Elbow, Moby, Weezer, U2 and Franz Ferdinand.

So, make sure you keep your eyes on these pages to find out about all of these and more.

Pop

CIRCULAR SOUNDS
Kelley Stoltz
$24.95
San Francisco’s Kelley Stoltz has been making quietly brilliant pop masterpieces for some years now. And on Circular Sounds, his latest album, he is once again releasing some of the best pop songs since The Beach Boys were around. He records at home, and in a world-first, has off-set the carbon from his electricity use to record this album. A long-time music critic’s favourite, it is certainly worth checking it out if you are into Elliott Smith, Brian Wilson or your basic slightly off-kilter pop genius. Dave Clarke is from Readings Carlton.

FALLING OFF THE LAVENDER BRIDGE
Lightspeed Champion
$29.95
After touring with Bright Eyes last year, Dev Hynes, 21-year-old guitarist for London’s indie dance-punks Test Icicles, has taken Bright Eyes’ producer (Mike Mogis) and some of Bright Eyes’ bandmates and

Saddle Creek cohorts (Bright Eyes’ Nate Walcott and members of The Faint, Cursive and Tilly and The Wall) to record a debut filled with alt.country/folk-pop that sounds a lot like … um … aahh … Bright Eyes. This album has created quite the fuss within the UK’s music press and is sure to be enjoyed by fans of any country tinged folk pop artists and … aahh … Bright Eyes. James Power is from Readings Carlton.

WATERSHED
KD Lang
$29.95.
Our special price $24.95 (Feb only)
KD Lang released one of the top five bestsellers in Readings history in late 2004. Hymns of the 49th Parallel has sold more than 2,500 copies in our stores and continues to win new fans every week. Watershed is her first album since then, and her first album of newly written songs since 2000. It is also the first album KD has produced herself. I would suggest to anyone who bought that album that they give Watershed a good listen; it will take a little while to sink in (and after all Hymns had the advantage of being an album of classic Canadian songs) but her songwriting skills are still there and her voice is still great. Definitely a grower. DC

RAIN
Joe Jackson
CD & DVD (DVD includes live performances, interview) $29.95
It’s been more than 20 years since Joe Jackson was what might be called a house-hold name. He was pretty huge in the late 70’s & early 80’s (think Look Sharp or Night and Day) and then seemingly his muse left him to release album after album which failed to find an audience. Here he is joined by the members of his original band and it all sounded pretty good. The piano-based pop music is not the thing it once was, but if you are at all feeling nostalgic for that time this is certainly a record for you. DC

FROM ONE TO ANOTHER
The Darling Downs
$29.95
Two legends of the Australian music scene (Ron Peno – front man of the legendary Died Pretty and Kim Salmon – The Scientists and The Surrealists) got together in 2005 to release the very good How Can I Forget This Heart Of Mine. In 2007 they got back together again to release the also very good From One To Another. The only difference is that Kim Salmon has discovered the banjo. Recorded at Dave Graney’s Ponderosa Studio this is self-described ’hillbilly jazz free-form tunes’. It’s just Kim and Ron; it’s raw but beautiful at the same time. DC

The Darling Downs will perform songs from this album at Readings Carlton, 6pm on Friday February 29.

ASK FORGIVENESS
Bonnie Prince Billy
$21.95
At the end of last year Will Oldham grabbed Esper’s lead vocalist Meg Baird, cellist Margie Wient and producer/engineer Greg Weeks to record this mini album consisting of seven of his favourite covers and one original. Although some of the covers may seem a little left of centre (such as metal icon Glen Danzig’s Am I Demon?), with the help of both Wient and Baird’s delicate touches, Oldham delivers the songs in his signature reflective poignancy that is sure to keep Bonnie Prince Billy’s legion of subjects coming back for more. JP

LIVE AT UNION CHAPEL
Damien Rice
$24.95
Anyone lucky enough to have seen Damien Rice in a live setting knows what a truly spellbinding experience it can be. This set, which was recorded in 2003, is a brief glimpse into his musical vision – and, as live recordings go, it’s a small triumph. Due to the time of recording, the set features songs from his first record O and some choice covers. Sometime collaborator and muse Lisa Hannigan dazzles on the Nina
Simone cover of Be My Husband and the vocal interchange between her and Rice on the non-album track Baby Sister is mesmerising. Although a live album never quite manages to fully capture the magic of actually being there, this should keep fans happy until this wonderful performer graces our shores once more. Declan Murphy is from Readings St Kilda.

SO FRENCHY SO CHIC 2008 Various

2CD SET $35.95

Now well established as an excellent annual compilation of groovy French tunes, So Frenchy So Chic 2008 is another fine way to introduce yourselves to many previously unknown French artists. This volume has more of an ‘indie’ feel to it and has made an excellent soundtrack in my office this past week. Highlights include Charlotte Gainsbourg, Louise Vertigo and Benjamin Biolay. Sid Grane is from Readings Carlton.

SHIPWRECKED AT THE ROYAL OAK (SOUNDVAULT)

Milk $29.95

What a wonderful blend of ol’ time folk, a tinge of jazz and Anglo roots all wrapped up in one fun-filled gumbo. The journey Milk takes us on is unashamedly Australian, full of stories that affect the common person in whatever period they set their songs in. Inspired by the band’s wide ranging travelling experiences, the result is worthy of a listen. And once you enter the world of Milk, you get caught up in a world full of pirates, songs of love and loss, Tasmania and its wilderness, the gold rush and other stories that capture snippets of our past and present. A staple at folk festivals and pubs around Australia, Milk will be playing at our Port Melbourne store in February. Come along and enjoy. You’ll have a ball! Lou Falco is from Readings Port Melbourne.

RUFUS DOES JUDY Rufus Wainwright

2 CD set. $30.95

Recorded over two nights at Carnegie Hall in New York in 2006, this is Rufus Wainwright’s song-for-song homage to Judy Garland’s legendary performances at the same venue in 1961. Backed by a 36-piece orchestra, Rufus is having a gay old time reviving the career of a huge gay icon. Not afraid of the possible career implications (this doesn’t exactly scream mainstream and I imagine the record company were aghast when first told of it), Wainwright puts in a fantastic performance and will likely find he has created an unlikely hit. SG

THRILLER 25TH ANNIVERSARY Michael Jackson

$33.95. $39.95 deluxe edition

Hard to imagine, but for a teenage listener today Michael Jackson’s Thriller is buried deeper in the mist of time than Elvis Presley’s ’66 sessions were for me when I started buying music. Will this reissue be as significant a pointer and as revelatory a discovery as RCA’s two-volume reissue of those Sun sessions were for me? There are common qualities which make the comparison a little less odious than it may appear. Both artists had to push against institutionalised racism—redneck radio for the first King, redneck MTV for the second—and both managed to do so by creating an unclassifiable and unique sound with the help of visionary producers. And both managed to make a uniquely androgynous sexualised and sophisticated version of source music supposedly carnal and simple, and suffer at the hands of purist critics as a result. And both would sell squillions of records. But of course, Thriller’s reputation really rests on supra-musical ground. What it does demonstrate is an unfailing ability to give an unknown public exactly what it didn’t realise it wanted. And as soon as it got it, it wanted more and more of it and Michael Jackson made sure there was plenty to go round. For perhaps the first time, buying the music wasn’t enough— all three big singles were really soundtracks to the videos anyway. The associated music films that were made to support three of the singles from the record and their importance as marketing tools is so well documented that we needn’t really discuss them here, though their tightly choreographed twentieth-century Broadway style was an important element in Michael Jackson’s distancing himself from the sex of soul that he would explore more and more through his voice. But any appearance of cynicism is purely retrospective—no one had done anything like this before, no one had any idea it would work. Michael Jackson could—and did—make timeless music. Mark Luffman is from Readings Malvern.

MOONSHINE SESSIONS Martin Solal Presents

Martin Solal is a French composer, DJ/producer and founder of the Gotan Project. One of the biggest names in lounge music and he has gone country. The Moonshine Sessions was recorded in Nashville with some excellent musicians. Included in the original copies is a DVD featuring a ‘making of’ doco and some unreleased extra tracks. Definitely some tongue-in-cheek action going on, but it would appear that Solal is paying tribute to, rather than poking fun at, country music. SG

ORCHARD Lizz Wright

$29.95

Lizz Wright is one of the finest American singers of the last ten years. Her two prior albums were both excellent (Salt in 2003, Dreaming Wide Awake in 2005), but I think she has managed to surpass those with this stunning album. Her other albums have mixed lusc pop and jazz; Orchard has more of a soul feel and her voice is just magnificent. I was given a copy of this just before Christmas and it was the most listened-to CD at my place over the past month. Definitely a recommended release. DC

KING HOKUM

C.W. Stoneking

$25.95

No, not a new release, but King Hokum has not been available for about three months now and we wanted to make sure you all knew it was back in our shops. Charles William Stoneking’s album has been a great success since it was initially released in September 2006. His unique voice and terrific backing band has made this a word-of-mouth hit. Think Deep South in America circa the 1920s. Close your eyes and forget that this is music made by a Melburnian in the twenty-first century. DC

Jazz

DUENDE: THE ROMANTIC PROJECT Joe Chindamo

$31.95

This is indeed a romantic project. Chindamo explores a set of originals and standards which reflect his Latin heritage. The album is characterised by passionate, melodic compositions, which occasionally remind one of the duende inherent in memorable Ennio Morricone themes. Chindamo has gathered a fine ensemble of musicians, and one could say the perfect instrumental combination, to interpret these compositions: Doug de Vries (guitar), Nigel MacLean (violin), and Sam Anning (bass). Chindamo performs these compositions with the flair and virtuosity which have made him such a recognisable pianist in Australia jazz music today. Michael Wallace is from Readings Carlton.

LITTLE CLAPS

Andrea Keller Quartet

$29.95

A group of new compositions by Keller perfectly realised by her long standing musical companions Eugene Ball, Ian Whitehurst, and Joe Talia. Little Claps is a great small-group jazz album. Keller’s musical sensibilities seem to float somewhere between European classical and American
MEETING OF THE WATERS
Mike Nock Project
$29.95
Nock’s latest release contrasts his other 2007 release, the ARIA award-winning Duologue album. While Duologue documents, in intimate setting, Nock the performer, Meeting of the Waters features Nock’s abilities as a composer and band-leader. Similar to his 2004 Big Small Band live recording, Meeting of the Waters features Nock’s compositions for a nine-piece ensemble. The ensemble consists of a mix of leading Sydney and Melbourne jazz musicians. Featuring compelling ensemble writing, together with fine solo contributions, this album is highly recommended. MW
Mike Nock won the ARIA best jazz album 2007 for Duologue, his album with American saxophonist Dave Liebman.

AFRICAN VIRTUOSOS
The Classic Guinean Guitar Group
$31.95
An extraordinary recording seeing the light of day for the first time on CD, featuring the acoustic guitar playing of two of the hottest African guitarists ever, Addouaye and Sekou Diabate. Most of these recordings are from a vinyl release from 1983, and the final track is an astounding 17 minute duet from 1970. This is all beautiful stuff, with hints of Latin and flamenco, but unmistakably African, with rippling, flowing melodies and improvisations. If you enjoyed that recent African acoustic guitar/kora classic In the Heart of the Moon, this is could be for you: much more dynamic, but equally beautiful. PB

SPECIAL FEATURE
NEW IRISH RELEASES
Lots of very good new Irish releases this month. All is forgiven after Dervish’s debacle at Eurovision last year with Travelling Show, a great new CD that kicks off with a stomping version of Cher’s Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves, given the full Celtic treatment. As usual, Cathy Jordan’s voice is sweet and gorgeous and the band is in top form on those intricate song arrangements and high energy tune-sets. Patrick Street return with On the Fly with one line-up change – sadly, we see the departure of Jackie Daly, but happily John Carthy (fute, fiddle and banjo) steps in. Andy Irvine weighs in with a version of that Aussie Depression tale, St Small. Matt Molloy, and John Carthy (fute, fiddle) deliver a really cranking collection of tunes on Pathway to the Well, with dynamic guitar support from Arty McGlynn.

Folk & World
DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS
Blind Boys of Alabama
$29.95
With a career spanning some 60 years, The Blind Boys of Alabama chose to record in New Orleans with some of that city’s finest musicians, like Allen Toussaint, The Preservation Hall Jazz Band and The Hot 8 Brass Band. The Blind Boys are never afraid to try new things, whether it’s been to record with the likes of Ben Harper, or add elements of hip-hop, or find inspiration in songs by artists like Tom Waits. This band have worked very hard over the years to bring gospel sounds to a wider audience and have succeeded, particularly with their last three or four albums. Obviously, this time around the music has a more jazzy/R & B / New Orleans sound, but there’s no}

jazz. Lyrical compositions which weave engaging melodies are matched by equally absorbing improvisations. Little Claps was nominated for best jazz album at the ARIA awards in 2007. Michael Wallace is from Readings Carlton

PB
Classical CDs

CLASSICAL SPECIALS OF THE MONTH

MARIAS CALLAS: THE COMPLETE STUDIO RECORDINGS

Maria Callas
EMI, 3959182, 70 CDs
Was $139.95, Now $99.95
A must for devotees of Maria Callas or opera in general. Once this limited edition sells out, that's it! So don't pass up this fantastic bargain.

HARMONIA MUNDI 50TH ANNIVERSARY BOX SET

Harmonia Mundi
HMXX90825097, 30 CDs
Was $149.95 now $99.95
A stunning collection from the great Harmonia Mundi label. Great performances, performers and fantastic sound make this set irresistible.

ETERNAL LIGHT

Elin Manahan Thomas
UCJ Cat No. 4765970
Was $29.95. Now $19.95
Debut solo album from Welsh soprano Elin Manahan-Thomas. A collection of popular arias reworked to cater for a wider audience, this album is a fantastic showcase for the stunning voice possessed by Manahan-Thomas.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: LARK ASCENDING & JOHN TAVENER:
SONG FOR ATHENE, DHYANA, LALISHRI

Nichola Benedetti, LPO, Andrew Litton
DG, 4766198. $29.95
Since being named BBC's Young Musician of the Year in 2004 the career of Nichola Benedetti has been on an upward path and the release of this, her third recording, will only enhance her reputation. The combination of John Tavener and Ralph Vaughan Williams may seem odd, but works really well. One word unites the works on this album, and that is 'ethereal'. The music of Sir John Tavener has been described more than once as having a celestial feel to it, a 'spiritual quality that strikes deep into the soul'. And Ralph Vaughan Williams' 'Lark Ascending' works beautifully alongside the Tavener compositions. The glue that holds everything together is of course the playing of Benedetti: a graceful and captivating performer. Phil Richards is from Readings Carlton.

NOCTURNE: CHOPIN CELLO SONATA TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR CELLO AND PIANO

Truls Mork
Virgin Classics, 3857842. $30.95
With this new disc, Truls Mork returns to the world of chamber music, a genre he is acknowledged for worldwide. As we know, Chopin composed almost exclusively for the piano, but the other instrument that really interested him was the cello. Truls Mork and pianist Kathrynn Stott work wonderfully well together. The reading of the Cello Sonata is worth the price of the disc alone. Highly recommended. PR

TCHAIKOVSKY: SYMPHONY NO 6, ROMEO AND JULIET OVERTURE-FANTASY

Paavo Jarvi & Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
Telarc, CD80861. $31.95
Paavo Jarvi and The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra are in first-class form on this new recording of Tchaikovsky’s sixth symphony, the Pathétique. It is a wonderful performance, beautifully balanced between sensitivity and swagger. In this recording Jarvi pays particular attention to the second movement, which is often treated as a sort of stop-gap between the first and third movements in other recordings that I have heard. But in the hands of Paavo Jarvi, it’s like you are hearing this section for the first time. Coupled with the Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy, this is one disc that should be added to your collection. Telarc’s big recording is wonderful – an aural feast. PR

MELCER PIANO CONCERTOS 1 & 2

Jonathan Plowright, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Christoph Koenig
Hyperion, CDAD67630. $33.95
Hyperion’s celebrated Romantic Piano Concerto series reaches volume 44. This disc includes two prize-winning concertos written in the 1890s by the Polish composer-pianist Henryk Melcer. The first concerto is written in the style of Liszt and Chopin, and is notable particularly for its thrilling finale, which is marked by its strong Polish character. The second concerto was also appreciated by contemporary critics for its imaginative use of Polish themes. Both works have very demanding moments and Jonathan Plowright is definitely up to the task at hand. This is another fine addition to this wonderful series from Hyperion. PR

HERZ: PIANO MUSIC

Philip Martin
Hyperion, CDAD67606. $33.95
Henri Herz was one of the most fashionable musical personalities of his day, performing to large audiences throughout Europe, and touring America to great acclaim. His music was so popular that he even outsold the works of Chopin and Liszt. By the early 1850s, however, his popularity had waned. But times change again and this very enjoyable music is worth our attention. The main work here and also Herz’s best known is the Variations on Non più mesta from Rossini’s La Cenerentola Op 60. This dazzling and demanding work is handled with great aplomb by Philip Martin as are the other pieces on this disc. PR

VICTORIOUS LOVE: HENRY PURCELL

Carolyn Sampson (soprano), Laurence Cummings, Elizabeth Kenny, Anne-Marie Lasla, Sarah Sexton, Andrea Morris, Jane Rogers
BISACD1536. $34.95
In Victorious Love, soprano Carolyn Sampson, with her extraordinarily beautiful voice, brings a judicious selection of 19 Purcell songs both well known and obscure. The album’s title is taken from a line of the disc’s opening song, Sweeter than Roses. Here, both singer and supporting players set the tone for what is an outstanding recital, showcasing Purcell’s music to its utmost brilliance. The accompaniments range from a single lute or spinet to string quartet with continuo. At all times, one is aware of the player’s involvement in the meaning of the texts and the nuance of the music. I can’t recommend this Purcell recital highly enough and have already picked it as one of my favourites for 2008. Catherine Koerner is from Readings Hawthorn.

DVORAK: RUSALKA

Opera Australia, Cheryl Barker, Richard Hickox
Chandos Chan. 10449, 3 CD Set. $69.95
Opera Australia’s performance of Rusalka was recorded live by Chandos at the Sydney Opera House in March 2007. The Libretto was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen’s The Little Mermaid. This is Rusalka’s story of human desire, self-sacrifice and the search for enlightenment. The title role of Rusalka is played by Australian-born Cheryl Barker, performing the role for the first time. Consistently this recording demonstrates why conductor Richard Hickox and his cast of Barker, co-stars Rosario La Spina, Elizabeth Whitehouse, Bruce Martin and Anne-Marie Owens won deserved plaudits from the Australian press while playing at the Sydney Opera House last March. This CD set is offered at a special introductory price of three CDs for the price of two. CK

APPARITION: HENRY PURCELL/GEORGE CRUMB

Christine Schäfer (soprano), Eric Schneider (piano)
Onyx, 4021. $29.95
Apparition brings together for the second time the outstanding partnership of soprano Christine Schäfer and accompanist Eric Schneider. Here they juxtapose the songs of Henry Purcell with contemporary American composer George Crumb (1929 – ), resulting in a more conceptual, theatrical, and modern approach to the material. This is achieved by programming the songs not chronologically but thematically and interspersing the songs with short, spoken sonnets by Shakespeare, thus creating a narrative. It puts Purcell in a completely different light from the Sampson disc and is intriguing and rewarding. This is only the second time Crumb’s Apparition (scored for voice and amplified piano) has been recorded. Having not heard the Crumb songs before it was quite a revelation, in particular the Three Early Songs. The stunning card box packaging is contained within a frosted plastic sleeve. The artwork shows Schäfer in wedding dress among the bones of dinosaurs at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris. CK
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