

The Main Feature



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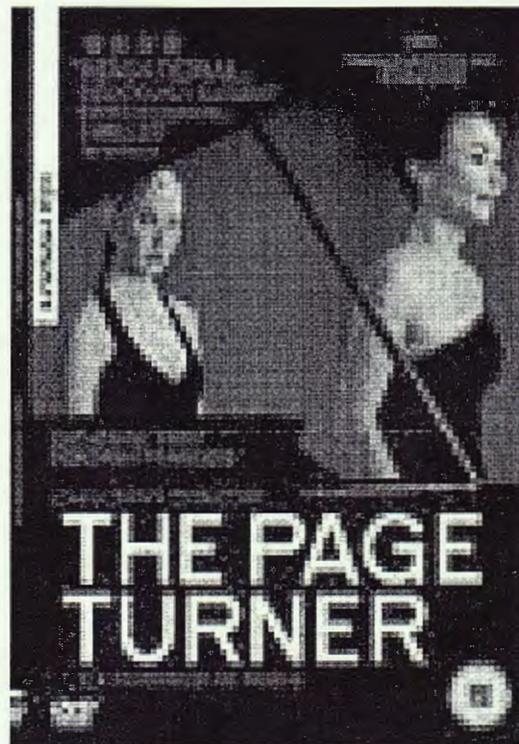
La Tourneuse de Pages (The Page Turner)

15 France/2006/85mins

Director Denis Dercourt
Producer Michel Saint-Jean
Writers Denis Dercourt
Jacques Sotty
Photography Jerome Peyrebrune

Cast

Arianne Fouchecourt	Catherine Frot
Melanie Prouvost	Deborah Francois
Melanie Prouvost (as a young girl)	Julie Richalet
Jean Fouchecourt	Pascal Greggory
Laurent	Xavier De Guillebon
Madame Prouvost	Christine Citti
Monsieur Prouvost	Jacques Bonnafe
Virginie	Clotilde Mollet
Tristan Fouchecourt	Antoine Martynციow
Jackie Onfray	Martine Chevalier
Worker	Andre Marcon
Radio Presenter	Ariele Butaux



This is a film about revenge. Melanie Prouvost is the intense, ten year old daughter of a butcher. She is a talented pianist who carries the burden of the aspirations of her mother, but not to anywhere near the same degree those of her father, who just wants her to enjoy her music. At Melanie's audition for the conservatory, one of the judges is the concert pianist Ariane Fouchecourt. By her attitude and lack of interest, which extends to signing an autograph for a fan during the girl's performance, Ariane disturbs Melanie's concentration to the extent that she cannot regain her composure and she fails the audition. Silently, she leaves with her mother but on the way out displays a malicious flash of temper towards one of the other pianists. An indication that there is something potentially dangerous about the little girl and a sinister pointer to what is to come.

Melanie resolves never to play again and several years later, and now a beautiful young woman, she takes a job with a major law firm. The head of the firm is Jean Fouchecourt, the husband of Ariane who, in effect, had ended Melanie's burgeoning career as a pianist. Melanie is a good employee, but her relentlessly impassive demeanour is unnerving and suggests that her choice of employer was no accident; while her outwardly demur, ever obliging, manner carries an air of menace as the tension builds. When Jean needs someone to look after his son Tristan, while Ariane prepares for an important concert, Melanie subtly insinuates herself into the role and into the Fouchecourt household.

Ariane has no recollection of any earlier involvement with the young woman. However, Melanie's apparently submissive, respectful competence begins to draw her closer to Ariane. Without being asked, she starts to turn the music pages for the nervous older woman who is somewhat lacking in confidence following a car accident. Melanie's quiet assurance calms Ariane and she comes more and more to rely upon Melanie's emotional and practical support. Melanie for her part makes herself increasingly indispensable to Ariane as the balance of emotional power gradually shifts from the wealthy, accomplished but vulnerable older woman to her implacable and secretly determined young employee, bent on revenge.

With her scraped back hair, impassive behaviour and flat shoes, Melanie glides through the deserted corridors of the Fouchecourt's imposing country mansion, where most of the film takes place, materializing in rooms without warning like a modern day version of Hitchcock's Mrs Danvers from *Rebecca*. Indeed, the style of Denis Dercourt's subtle and highly assured film has been compared, more generally, to that of Hitchcock or Chabrol's perverse thrillers. Reviewers are beloved of these comparisons. I suppose it provides an opportunity to show off their knowledge. Another of them has suggested that *The Page Turner* had much in common with Haneke's *Cache*, which was shown at the Club in October 2006. He observed that "In both, an apparently small act has a profound effect on someone's life. Like Haneke, Dercourt wants to reveal the fragility of bourgeois personal repression and its vulnerability to any intrusion of real powerful emotion. If Haneke operates on a wider social and political canvas, the forensic intensity of Dercourt's insinuation of threat and menace into the heart of a wealthy privileged family has a power of its own. Both work well on the thriller level even if Dercourt's film achieves a resolution of a kind that Haneke rejected."

Denis Dercourt is an accomplished classical musician and thus has a rare insight into the musician's psyche. Consequently, Melanie's steely determination to exact her revenge on Ariane has a chilling air of authenticity. Although Dercourt shot his first feature film as far back as 1999, *The Page Turner*, which was his first thriller, put him firmly on the map. The film is helped by the outstanding performances of the two main characters. Catherine Frot, an experienced actress, normally plays very controlled roles in comedies, but in *The Page Turner* she portrays a character who loses control. By way of contrast, this was only the second film of Deborah Francois. In her first film, *L'Enfant*, which we saw at the Club as recently as November 2007, she played the part of a teenage, unmarried, near delinquent mother. In the very different role of Melanie she is quite superb and her performance marks her out as someone to watch.

Dercourt's cool, elegant and often witty film remains admirably ambiguous until the very final scenes and even then not all the loose ends are firmly tied. It is a meticulous piece of work: beautifully shot and assembled with a proper understanding of music and the important role it can play in people's lives.

Neville Ledsome

BBC NEWS

The 61st Cannes Film Festival has opened with the premiere of Julianne Moore's new film *Blindness*.

Thousands of movie fans and media packed the streets to see the stars take to the red carpet for the opening event.

Blindness sees the Oscar nominated Moore play a woman who can see, in a world where people are rapidly losing their sight.

The "white blindness" soon takes over, with the victims being quarantined in what can only be described as a mental hospital from hell.

Moore said: "The first day we went in and looked at the sets. They'd done such a great job we were almost sick."

The star follows her blind husband into the nightmarish "society of the blind", but keeps her sight a secret from everyone else. She then uses her advantage to help other victims.

Blindness is directed by Fernando Meirelles who won huge praise for *The Constant Gardener*. It also stars Mark Ruffalo who was in *Zodiac* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, and Danny Glover of *Lethal Weapon* fame. It is one of the 22 films being judged for the prestigious Palm D'Or award by a jury including Sean Penn and Natalie Portman.

Ironically for a movie where Julianne Moore's appearance shouldn't matter, she decided to dye her hair blonde. But she's not staying that way. She added: "I thought red hair was too strong for this film. But I don't want to do it again, I don't like it very much."

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Your Views

An amazing film – light hearted

An excellent film

Still good on second viewing

A everyday story of Spanish folk!

Most intriguing. What a web of deception

"Ghosts don't cry" – oh yes they do!

The sound was excellent

Such an original and exciting film. Even better second time around.

An intriguing story well told and acted

Very enjoyable in all respects. Excellent study of those women and their inter relationship

Almodovar, Cruz and cast were brilliant

Excellent

The acting was good but the plot was bonkers

Reactions to

Volver – 8th May 2008

Score 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Votes ~ ~ ~ ~ 1 1 7 15 5 3 1

Total Votes - 33 Average Score - 7.06 Position in Season - 7th

Film	Score	Position
The Lives of Others	8.23	1 st
The Painted Veil	8.09	2 nd
Little Miss Sunshine	7.886	3 rd
Notes on a Scandal	7.73	Joint 3 rd
Last King of Scotland	7.73	4 th
Jour de Fete	7.26	5 th
Away from Her	7.2	6 th
Volver	7.06	7 th
Belleville Rendezvous	6.97	8 th
Pans Labyrinth	6.88	9 th
The Prestige	6.86	10 th
Offside	6.56	11 th
L'Enfant	6.37	12 th
Consequences of Love	6.24	13 th
Belle et la Bette	5.97	14 th
Black Cat, White Cat	5.74	15 th
The Day I became a Woman	5.72	16 th

Next Time



12th June 2008 - The Departed

Scorsese finally won his Best Director Oscar for this tale of rivalry in which a gangster is chosen to infiltrate the police, while a young police officer is chosen to penetrate the gang. When their paths cross what will be the result? All star cast including Jack Nicholson,

Leonardo DiCaprio and Matt Damon.  Usa/2006/151 mins

Repropoint

sponsors photocopying of the main feature