



BESTSELLERS

NON-FICTION Hardbacks

Last week's ratings in brackets

1 (3) *Jamie's Ministry of Food: Anyone Can Learn to Cook in 24 Hours*
by Jamie Oliver
(Michael Joseph, £25)

2 (1) *At My Mother's Knee... and Other Low Joints*
by Paul O'Grady
(Bantam, £18.99)

3 (4) *Parky: My Autobiography*
by Michael Parkinson
(Hodder, £20)

4 (6) *Dear Fatty*
by Dawn French
(Century, £18.99)

5 (2) *Guinness World Records: 2009*
(Guinness World Records, £20)

Paperbacks

1 (1) *The Duchess*
by Amanda Foreman
(HarperPerennial, £7.99)

2 (2) *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher: or the Murder at Road Hill House*
by Kate Summerscale
(Bloomsbury, £11.99)

3 (3) *Shakespeare: the World as a Stage*
by Bill Bryson
(HarperPerennial, £7.99)

4 (4) *Spilling the Beans*
by Clarissa Dickson Wright
(Hodder, £7.99)

5 (-) *Do Polar Bears Get Lonely?: and 97 Other Intriguing Science Questions*
by Mick O'Hare
(Profile, £7.99)

PICK OF THE PAPERBACKS



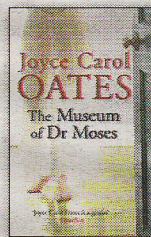
The Presence
by Dannie Abse
Vintage, £8.99

The Presence began as a diary kept by the poet Dannie Abse the

year after his wife's sudden death in 2005. Reading the book feels like intruding on a grieving man's thoughts. The "presence" is his wife Joan, though it is her absence that shadows the diary entries. Abse quotes verse at length from writers such as Henry King and Amir Gilboa, as if making a personal scrapbook. His poet's eye is sharpest outlining his life in mourning, as when he ruminates on the quiet of his house and empty bed. Encompassing sorrow and remembrance of joy, *The Presence* provides a delicate map of loss.

Heather McRobie

7.5/10



The Museum of Dr Moses
by Joyce Carol Oates
Quercus, £7.99

Each tale in *Joyce Carol Oates's* superb

collection of short stories is an exploration of human weakness and power, and in each the suspense is maintained to the final moment. The title story is an affecting horror story based on the power of the imagination. Others focus on unpredictable violence and the thin line between madness and sanity – though there is little authorial moralising. Oates's storytelling is aided by impressive pacing and quirky characters. Her direct prose carries the reader successfully through the narrative.

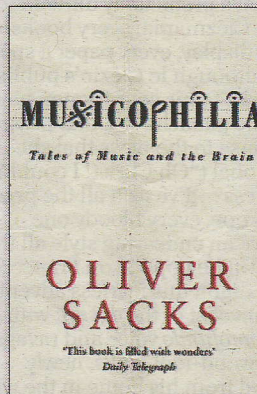
Jo Caird

5/10

Musicophilia
by Oliver Sacks
Picador, £8.99

Oliver Sacks is the outstanding popular writer about the brain. In books such as *Awakenings* and *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, he told lucid and affectionate stories of neurological

patients, which describe the strangeness of their world and reveal obscure aspects of human consciousness. *Musicophilia* asks what is special about music and what it tells us about ourselves. He relates the histories of his own patients and also those of his many correspondents.

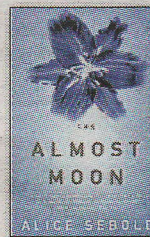


Explanations of the neurological basis for these experiences provide the book's intellectual counterpoint. Sacks describes how music dominates the mind or elude it completely; how the energy of Tourette's

may be translated into musical rhythms; how only music may connect with some patients profoundly lost in dementia. Through anecdote, argument and science, *Musicophilia* makes a passionate case for music as a way to discover our selves.

Christopher Hands

8/10

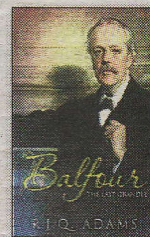


The Almost Moon
by Alice Sebold
Picador, £7.99

Alice Sebold, the author of *The Lovely Bones*, has written a

novel as bleak and violent as that enormously successful first novel. In an act motivated by both mercy and frustration, Helen Knightly kills her elderly and senile mother, a woman who never gave her daughter the love that she craved. The hours and days that follow, in which Helen comes to realise the magnitude of her actions and almost loses herself in reflecting on her damaged past, is an effective portrait of repressed American family life. Sebold's prose tries hard to shock at many points, but her story is undeniably gripping. JC

6/10

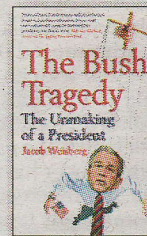


Balfour
by R.J.Q. Adams
John Murray, £12.99

Although "Balfourian" became a byword for measured appraisal,

Balfour's life was one of spectacular engagement with his age. In a political career spanning the Boer war and the First World War, he remained the fulcrum of successive governments. R.J.Q. Adams's impeccably researched biography deals confidently with personal intrigue and international crisis. As PM, Balfour took a low view of politics: "too pretty to be called 'tragedy' and too dull to deserve the name 'comedy'". But the machinations of power are compelling, and Adams's study as prolific as his subject. Jonathan Bray

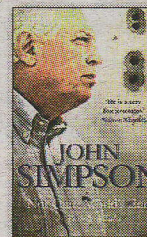
7.5/10



The Bush Tragedy
by Jacob Weisberg
Bloomsbury

This biography of George W. Bush fo

on his relationship with father. The first Bush was cautious and patrician; second is decisive and, his Ivy League education prefers to play the cow. Sadly for us, their conflict has been played out on world stage. Jacob Weisberg overplays the tragic dirge (Senior as Henry IV, Du Prince Hal, Jeb as Hotspur). More interesting are the revelations of Bush's cunning and malice: he panders to evangelical leaders he privately calls "wackos" and Karl Rove is never in to his birthday parties. Sameer Rahim



Not Quite World's
by John Simpson
Pan Macmillan

Is there anywhere John Simpson hasn't been? The fou

instalment of Simpson's memoirs takes us from to the Congo, from Bagin Broadway. "I spend much my professional life going the kind of place that set people avoid," he writes – and our news coverage is immensely richer for it. Iraq features prominently described with anger and subtlety, qualities often from the world of 24-hour rolling news. Simpson's fatherhood adds a touch of gloss to the experiences the grand maverick of the BBC foreign desk, here his rumbustious, grumpy humorous best. JB