

IN LONDON TONIGHT

BY RICHARD GODWIN

Plan your evening's entertainment with our guide to the best films, shows, gigs and one-off events that are still taking bookings (at the time of going to press).

PICK OF THE NIGHT

Bolshoi Ballet

7.30pm, Royal Opera House, 45 Floral Street, WC2. £6.50-£82.

Tube: Covent Garden

The world-renowned Moscow ballet company comes pirouetting into London exuding old-school opulence, opening its season tonight with Don Quixote.

020 7304 4000

FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

The Afro Cuban All Stars

6pm, Somerset House, Strand, WC2. £23. Tube: Temple

Harking back to the golden age of Cuban music and giving it an Afro twist, these accomplished musicians should have everyone dancing into the night.

0871 230 2636

THE BIG FILM

Fahrenheit 9/11 (15)

Across London

Polarising opinion across the board, the biggest-grossing documentary ever is not an exercise in fine logic or objectivity; it is however a muscular diatribe, and a powerful piece of film-making, by turns funny, poignant and thought-provoking.

BEST COMEDY

Stand Up for a Good Cause

8pm, Comedy Store, 1a Oxendon Street, SW1. £15. Tube: Piccadilly Circus



Another of the Store's regular charity fundraisers, this time in aid of families with disabled children. Arthur Smith heads a sterling line-up, which includes Stewart Lee, above, Sean Collins and Francesca Martinez.

0870 060 2340

BEST THEATRE

Journey's End

7.30pm, Playhouse Theatre, Northumberland Avenue, WC2.

£15-£37.50. Tube: Charing Cross
The success of this revival of RC Sheriff's trench drama should come as no surprise — it's a finely wrought play, and the all-male cast turn in poignant performances.

0870 060 6622

AND FOR FREE

Future House London

Until 8pm, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, SE1. FREE! Tube:

A range of architects think outside the box to display their proposals for solving London's housing problems, including, among others, spherical houseboats.

www.riba-london.com

To get your event listed, please email details to richard.godwin@standard.co.uk

Brutally seductive simplicity

EXHIBITION

Saul Bass

Design Museum, SE1

Nick Hackworth

A REMINDER of how fresh and exciting simple, bold and daring graphic design can be is provided by the retrospective exhibition of the American designer, film-maker and advertising creative Saul Bass, who died in 1996 at the age of 76. He will chiefly be remembered for his work in film; inventor of the idea of the creative title sequence, he designed some of the most iconic film branding imagery of the 20th century.

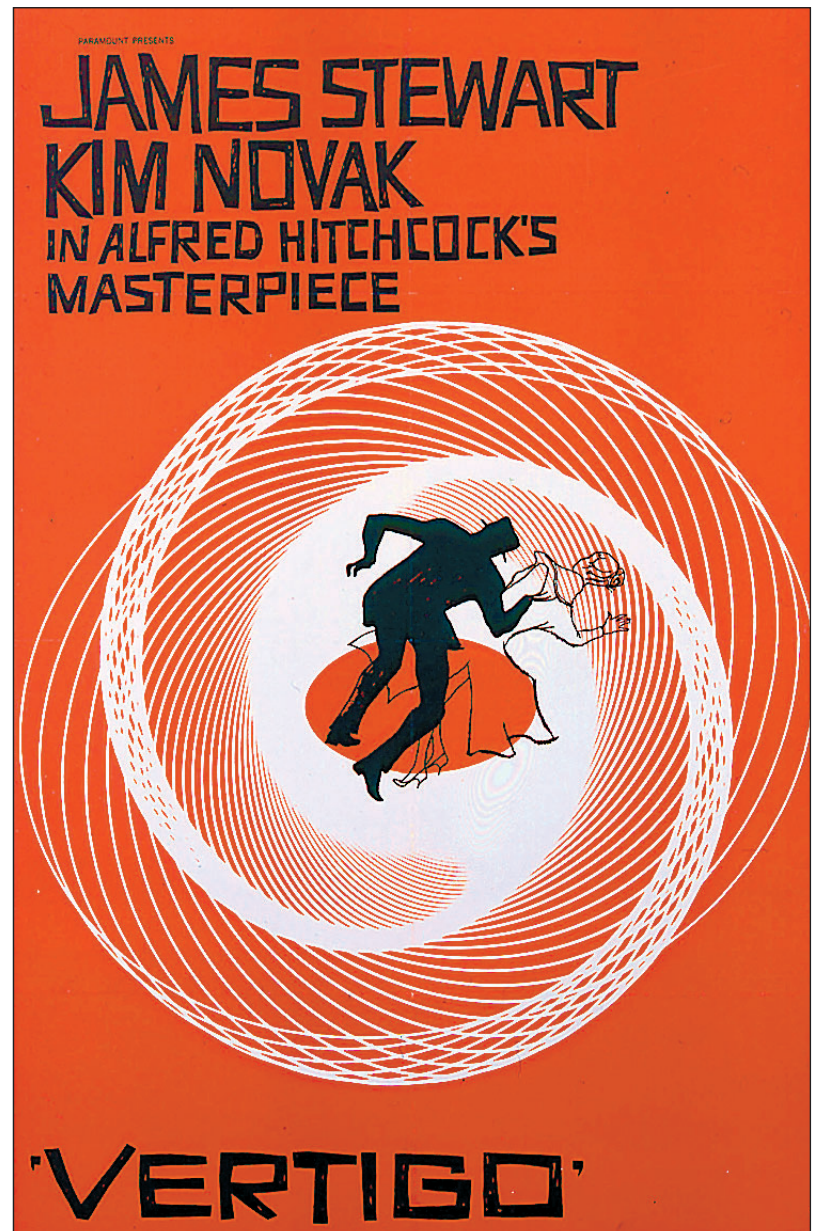
Before his work on Otto Preminger's films in the Fifties, film titles were bland lists of cast and crew that preceded the action, but Bass packaged the information in bravura sequences of animated design or independently shot film, and so set a style and tone for the movie from the first moment of its screening. Most famous was his title sequence for Hitchcock's Psycho, in

which severe horizontal and vertical lines frantically traverse the screen, manically assembling and disassembling to evoke the psychology of Norman Bates. So effective did Hitchcock believe the sequence to be at priming the audience, that he issued instructions that no late-comers were to be admitted to any showing.

During his more fertile period, the Fifties and Sixties, Bass turned out a succession of classic designs, including those for Preminger's *The Man With The Golden Arm*, *Anatomy Of A Murder* and *Bunny Lake Is Missing*, Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and *Psycho* and Jerome Robbins's *West Side Story*. Common to all of them was a ruthless economy. Bass would create a single gripping symbolic motif or image — the jagged arm, the dismembered body — to encapsulate and represent the film.

Underlying this sensibility was the stern ethos of the Bauhaus, instilled by his Hungarian teacher Gyorgy Kepes at Brooklyn College in the Forties.

In the late Sixties Bass turned from designing for film to film-making,



Ruthless economy: Bass's design for *Vertigo*, produced during his most fertile period

returning to it only in the Nineties, when he worked extensively with Martin Scorsese and produced what is regarded as his final masterpiece, the intro for *Casino*. This is not a

patch on the direct and brutally seductive simplicity of his earlier work.

● Until: 10 October. Information: 0870 833 9955.

Epic and triumphant last Turn

THE final weekend of Michael Berkeley's 10-year stint as artistic director of the Cheltenham Festival provided an appropriate envoi to his era: a semi-staging of Britten's *Turn Of The Screw* and the world premiere of a Trojan trilogy entitled *Birds, Barks, Bones* by an outstanding composer of the younger generation, Edward Rushton.

Dagny Gioulami's subtle, witty libretto for the latter provides Rushton with the material for an entertaining postmodernist take on the story of Odysseus that manages to realise an epic dimension that is coloured but not

OPERA

Birds, Bones, Barks; The Turn of the Screw

Cheltenham Festival

Barry Millington

destroyed by touches of surreal, contemporary humour.

The central character of the first part of the trilogy is Philoctetes, a wounded Greek soldier once wronged by Odysseus. His friends, Owl and Swallow, act like a pair of Edwardian music-hall comedians, or perhaps Beckettian tramps, or

perhaps the remnants of a Greek chorus.

Odysseus makes a dramatic entry from a box that may be a pre-echo of the Trojan horse. In the third part, various women from Odysseus's life squabble over his body as he lies in state.

The direction of The Opera Group by John Fulljames, with designs by Adam Wiltshire, is highly imaginative. Rushton's astonishingly inventive, accomplished score was excellently sung and played by a cast of 10 and ensemble of 15. Catch this superbly crafted piece of music theatre at the Linbury next week.

The *Turn Of The Screw* was mounted by a group of musicians associated with the festival. The Belcea Quartet and London Winds were at the core and the fine ensemble was sensitively conducted by Paul Kildea. Production values left something to be desired, and it was difficult to make out many of the words in the large space of the Town Hall, but there was some otherwise excellent singing, chiefly from Mark Padmore as Peter Quint and Miriam Gordon-Stewart as Miss Jessel. Yvonne Kenny and Della Jones took the roles of the Governess and Mrs Grose.

Director Adrian Osmond needed a full staging to develop convincingly his thesis that the children may have benefited in some way from the nefarious Quint and Miss Jessel. Whatever the truth about these "ghosts", the shade of Britten (Berkeley's godfather) has proved a decidedly more benign influence on the latter's planning at Cheltenham. His achievement is an immensely creditable one and it is reassuring that his multi-talented successor, Martyn Brabbins, is no less committed to the challenge of presenting today's music alongside the classics.

● Information: 020 7304 4000.

A Brimstone that's lacking theatrical fire

THEATRE

Brimstone and Treacle Bridewell

Rhoda Koenig

SUCH a nice young man, Martin. Not only does he make the beds and do the washing up so that poor, overworked Amy can have a break — he makes it possible for her to leave the house for the first time in two years, by looking after her bedridden daughter. When

Amy returns, she is delighted to find Pattie unusually quiet, but no wonder: Martin has been raping her.

Since Dennis Potter's play was banned from the BBC in 1976, much of our television has become emetic; *Brimstone* remains cathartic.

Sexual violence is only one element to alarm viewers of a nervous disposition: there is also racial violence, devil worship and incest.

Throughout, Pattie, whom an accident has rendered brain-damaged, crippled and mute, lies in bed,

choking and convulsing. It is even creepier if you recall that Potter was himself bedridden for years, and was molested as a child.

What is most disturbing, though, and decidedly brilliant, is the way Potter intertwines good and evil, foolishness and wisdom, wish and deed.

The play also flickers disconcertingly between the real and the symbolic, the explicit and the mysterious, transitions that the stage version makes more clumsily than the television one. This problem is

intensified by Alistair Green's plodding production. Lorna Doyle and Peter Sundby as the parents are much too young and robust, and the latter acts as over-emphatically as Eric Idle in his caricature of Cardigan Man.

The best performance is that of the lovely Maria Carson, as Pattie, who manages, without compromising the ugly realism of her portrayal, to convey her character's essential sweetness.

● Until & August. Information: 0207 936 3456.