

Our critics pick the

COMEDY

The Pub Landlord No one portrays the psyche of the embattled Little Englander as well as Al Murray's rabble-rousing bar steward. After West End sell-outs he has relocated his landlord to a larger hostelry. *20 Sept, Hammersmith Apollo, 0870 6063400.*

Billy Connolly The seminal stand-up is now in his sixties and twice as funny as comics half his age. He is on Parkinson tomorrow, but nothing matches the Big Yin in the flesh. *27 Sept-2 Oct, 6-8 Oct, Hammersmith Apollo, 0870 6063400.*

Cybill Shepherd Better known for her romantic links with Elvis Presley and svengali Peter Bogdanovich than her scalpel wit, although fans of the television series *Moonlighting* may recall her deft, screwball sense of humour. Shepherd's cabaret evenings will combine memories of her Tinseltown tussles with standards by the likes of Cole Porter. *27 Sept-9 Oct, Soho Theatre, 020 7478 0100.*

Perrier Awards Showcase This year's shock winner, Will Adamsdale, headlines, with earlier nights starring the other shortlisted acts, Sarah Kendall, Chris Addison, Epitaph and Reginald D Hunter. *3-10, 17 Oct, Her Majesty's Theatre, 020 7494 5558.*

Brighton Comedy Festival London's favourite seaside escape boasts an impressive line-up for its third year. *8-23 Oct, various venues, 01273 709709.*

Will Adamsdale The Perrier champion delivers performances of his impeccably nuanced life coaching send-up, Jackson's Way. *13, 14, 20 Oct, Battersea Arts Centre, 020 7223 2223.*

Bruce Dessau



Dictating terms: Mel Brooks, centre, director of the 1968 film *The Producers* with Richard Dreyfuss and Lee Evans, stars of the stage version

THEATRE

Stuff Happens David Hare takes on Blair, Bush and the war on terror. The reliably excellent Olivier Award winner Alex Jennings stars as Dubya. *In rep until 6 Nov, National's Olivier, 020 7452 3000.*

The Woman in White Andrew Lloyd Webber teams up with director Trevor Nunn, playwright Charlotte "Humble Boy" Jones, as well as Michael Crawford and Maria Friedman for the Wilkie Collins adaptation. *Previewing now, Palace Theatre, 0870 895 5579.*

Cloaca Kevin Spacey's tenure as artistic director of the Old Vic begins with the actor directing a quality British cast — Hugh Bonneville, Neil Pearson, Stephen Tompkinson — in Maria Goos's look at friends dealing with middle age. *16 Sept-11 Dec, Old Vic, 0870 060 6628.*

Primo Antony Sher stars in his own one-man adaptation of Primo Levi's *If This is a Man*, an account of surviving the horrors of Auschwitz. His director is Richard Wilson, who is emerging from the long shadow of Victor Meldrew thanks to some fine work overseeing new

writing. *In rep 24 Sept-1 Dec, National's Cottesloe, 020 7452 3000.*

Forty Winks Kevin Elyot enjoyed great success with his two earlier plays for the Royal Court, *My Night with Reg* and *Mouth to Mouth*. He'll be hoping to make that a hat trick with this study of a loner who revisits old acquaintances. Katie Mitchell directs. *28 Oct-4 Dec, Royal Court Downstairs, 020 7565 5000.*

The Producers Mel Brooks's Broadway musical based on his gloriously bad-taste 1968 film finally makes it to the West End. Richard Dreyfuss stars as the theatrical impresario who dreams up *Springtime for Hitler*; Lee Evans is accountant Leo Bloom. *Previews from 22 Oct, Theatre Royal Drury Lane, 0870 890 1109.*

By the Bog of Cats Holly Hunter (The Piano) stars as Hester Swane, a traveller in the stark landscape of rural Ireland who is betrayed by the father of her child. Marina Carr is the playwright; RSC associate director Dominic Cooke directs. *Previews from 19 Nov, Wyndham's, 0870 060 6633.*

His Dark Materials Another run for last year's widely praised two-part adaptation of Philip Pullman's trilogy. There has been some tweaking of the script, and Nicholas Hytner returns to direct a largely new cast. *20 Nov-2 April 2005, National's Olivier, 020 7452 3000.*

Mary Poppins The much-loved film is belatedly brought to the stage by director Richard Eyre. Oscar-winning screenwriter Julian "Gosford Park" Fellowes has written the book. *Previews from 6 Dec, Prince Edward Theatre, 0870 850 9191.*

Fix Up Kwame Kwei-Armah's *Elmina's Kitchen* won him last year's Evening Standard Theatre Award for Most Promising Playwright. He returns with *Fix Up*, set in Tottenham during Black History month. *In rep from 7 Dec, National's Cottesloe, 020 7452 3000.*

Aladdin Sir Ian McKellen apparently fulfils a lifelong ambition by taking the role of Widow Twankey. *17 Dec-22 Jan 2005, Old Vic, 0870 060 6628.*

Fiona Mountford

CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITIONS

Glenn Brown The innovative ex-Turner Prize nominee, infamous for "copying" other people's paintings, presents new work. *14 Sept-7 Nov, Serpentine Gallery, 020 7402 6075.*

Bruce Nauman Revered for his entertaining exploration of contemporary experience through neon sculptures, film and installation, the 63-year-old American unveils his attempt to fill the Turbine Hall. *12 Oct-28 March 2005, Tate Modern, 020 7401 5000.*

Frieze Art Fair The opening of the fair, though only in its second year, represents the highlight of the season with a host of top international galleries displaying their wares. *15-18 Oct, Regent's Park, 020 7025 8000.*

Turner Prize The usual media attention should fall upon the work of the four nominees — Kutlug Ataman, Jeremy Deller, Yinka Shonibare, Langlands & Bell, despite the disappointing line-up. *20 Oct-23 Jan 2005, Tate Britain, 020 7401 5000.*

Robert Frank A retrospective of the legendary 20th-century photographer. *28 Oct-23 Jan 2005, Tate Modern, 020 7401 5000.*

New York's Museum of Modern Art Moma reopens on 20 Nov, after a redesign and expansion that has doubled the size of the world's leading modern art museum. A reminder that London isn't quite the undisputed capital of the art world yet.

Faces in the Crowd An attempt to show that avant-grade realism has been just as important as more iconoclastic forms of avant-garde art, including works by Hopper, Bacon, Grosz, Gursky and Richter. *3 Dec-27 Feb 2005, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 020 7522 7888.*

Nick Hackworth

I want to limit the cost not the conversation.
Calls to UK mobiles capped
at 30p for up to 60 mins.*

Do business your way with BT Business Plan. Call 0800 389 8716 or go to bt.com/btbusinessplan and get a 10% discount on your line rental if you sign up online.†



BT
More power to you

*Capped calls require a new subscription to BT Business Plan. Available with £500 commitment tier or above. Minimum term contract required. Annual minimum call spend and reconciliation fees apply. Pence per minute rates apply after 60 minutes. Applies to UK mobiles only. Roaming mobiles excluded. Other exclusions apply. Pence per minute rates apply once the total number of capped calls to any one mobile exceeds an average of 4 hours per day in any calendar month. Terms and conditions apply. See bt.com/businessplan. †Available to BT Business Plan customers when registering online with Business Line reward, registering to receive their bill online and to pay via Monthly Payment Plan. Exclusions, conditions and reconciliation fees may apply.