

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

Paul Lewis

7.30pm, Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, SE1. £8-£21. Tube: Waterloo, Embankment
The award-winning pianist presents a challenging recital of Chopin, Busoni, Scriabin and Beethoven.
0870 380 0400

OPEN YOUR MIND

The Black Rider

7.45pm, Barbican Hall, Silk Street, EC2. £10-£40. Tube: Barbican, Moorgate
An avant-garde melodrama, combining the text of William Burroughs and the music of Tom Waits. Starring Marianne Faithfull as the Devil.
020 7638 8891

IN THE PARTY MOOD

Favela Chic

6pm-1am, Notting Hill Arts Club, 21 Notting Hill Gate, W11. £5, free before 8pm. Tube: Notting Hill Gate
A fusion of Brazilian funk, hip hop and samba from the legendary Parisian party promoters. With outrageous costumes, visuals and decorations.
020 7460 9960

THE BIG RELEASE

Bad Education (15)

Across London
Almodóvar's melodramatic noir thriller starring the stunning Gael García Bernal (below) falling in love and cross-dressing with his old friend Fele Martínez.



BOOKING AHEAD

Kelis and Missy Elliott

Wembley Arena, 19 June
Two of the brightest, feistiest women working in American urban music team up for what promises to be a fantastic tour.
0870 739 0739

... AND FOR FREE

New City Architecture

until 6pm, Finsbury Avenue, Broadgate, EC2. FREE! Tube: Liverpool Street, Moorgate
This interactive exhibition examines the architectural developments that have taken place within the Square Mile in the past two decades and imagines what the future may hold for London's ever-mutating skyline.
020 7250 0530

STAYING IN

DVD — The Lord of the Rings Trilogy

The moment we've all been waiting for: invite your mates round, find the biggest TV you can and indulge in a nine-hour, Middle-earth marathon.

If you would like your event to be listed, please email details to richard.godwin@standard.co.uk

Taking a backwards glance for inspiration

EXHIBITION

Being Present: Eight Painters

Jerwood Space, SE1

Nick Hackworth

IN THEIR aims and ambitions, the organisers of this exhibition are to be lauded. They have brought together eight successful, British figurative painters, aged between 29 and 45, most of them prize-winners in the BP Portrait Award, to show that figurative painting can be as vital and as contemporary a medium as any other in the representation and interpretation of modern life.

The most vocal member of the pack is the youngest, Stuart Pearson Wright, born in 1975, who won the Portrait Award in 2001 and used his victory as a platform from which to harangue Tate director Sir Nicholas Serota for his narrow championing of the so-called avant-garde and bias against more traditional work.

Critic William Feaver's observation in the Jerwood's catalogue, that "the resourceful painter may well look more to 14th century Siena than to 21st century Hoxton Square", would appear to support Pearson Wright's position.

Certainly, long after the deluded ideologies of modernism and postmodernism that have shaped art for the past century have faded away, the human form will remain the same and people will still be painting it.

Unfortunately, judging by this show, they are likely to be doing it pretty averagely, for the work of these artists is itself symptomatic of the decline they have sought to arrest.

There is some good here: Pearson Wright is a talented painter, though his theatrical elongation of the human form often teeters into caricature; Carl Randall shows some controlled and competent drawings;



Stretching a point: Carl Randall shows some controlled and competent paintings. This is *Girl and Boy at Table* (2003)

Phil Hale is adept at depicting the tones of human skin in his dark works and Brendan Kelly's *The Doorway* is an excellent painting, well observed and full of mood.

However, given the status of these artists in their corner of the art

world, this show is too full of mediocrity, poor draughtsmanship, crude handling of paint and limited ambition. To a great extent this is not the fault of the artists, for all were taught long after the art schools abandoned the serious teaching of

skills in favour of instituting a more conceptual approach to learning.

They are exponents of a tradition that was deliberately killed off rather than dying of natural causes.
● Until 4 July. Information: 020 7654 0171.

An abbey road leads back to a 17th century masterpiece

"THE greatest composer before Bach" is how Heinrich Biber was described by Hindemith. And nowhere is that greatness more apparent than in his *Missa Christi Resurgentis*, last night's performance of which by the English Concert was the first in Europe since the 17th century.

This was a considerable coup for the Bath International Music Festival, under the inspired artistic direction of Tim Joss, and there could hardly have been a more ideal venue than the imposing yet modestly-scaled Bath Abbey.

The swirling fan vaulting provided a magnificent visual counterpart to the soaring vocal lines (the Choir of the English Concert in fine voice) and the high-wire duetting of cornetti and clarini, negotiated with stunning

CLASSICAL

The English Concert/Manze

Bath Festival

Barry Millington

accuracy by some of the world's best players.

All the abbey lacks is suitable galleries from which musicians might have launched their antiphonal fusillades, as the first performers did in Salzburg Cathedral.

Instead, they entered and departed to a six-part sonata, also by Biber, called *The Peasants' Church Outing*, the authentically earthy tone supplied, I suspect, by brass players.

Two further sonatas from Biber's 1682 collection of *Sacred and Secular String Music* were interpolated, as was the 10th of the *Rosary Sonatas*, dispatched with

plangent scordatura tuning by director Andrew Manze, capturing a perfect blend of virtuosity and piety.

The charismatic Manze, rising in his seat as he steered the ensemble through complex metrical changes, is simply made for this quirky music.

The nine singers — as with Bach, no one knows for sure whether the parts would have been taken by multiple voices — made up for lack of numbers with a colourful rendering of Biber's word-painting and melting harmonies in the *Agnus Dei*.

It won't be quite the same in the Wigmore Hall tonight, but happily this performance will be broadcast by Radio 3 on 1 June.

● *The Bath Festival continues to 7 June.* Information: 01225 463362.

The real Fergie's still scaling the heights

THE real Fergie, as all jazz fans know, is neither a royal redhead nor dyspeptic football manager, but the trumpet superstar whose hard-swinging *Big Bop Nouveau* shook London rigid last summer.

Last night this chunky Canadian veteran and his young team were going for glory again, a new-look outfit with a familiar mission — to excite.

William Bonness, a funky pianist who knows his Wynton Kelly, was new. So were saxmen Julio Monterrey, a cleverly oblique altoist, the Wayne Shorterish tenorist Juan Turros and a dashing, high-energy drummer named Stockton Helbing.

But it was that superslick brass section, built around trombonist Reggie Watkins and three hot trumpeters, including the Freddie Hubbard-like Carl Fischer, who kept things blazing.

JAZZ

Maynard Ferguson's Big Bop Nouveau

Ronnie Scott's, W1

Jack Massarik

"Now that I'm gettin' a little older I just mime those high notes down front," Ferguson fibbed with a grin. Miming was never as ear-searing as this, but during his *Medley of MF Hits* — "those are my initials, y'know" — he stepped back and generously allowed lead-trumpet Patrick Hession to do some screaming of his own.

Between times, there was also Ferguson's flugelhorn balladry on *But Beautiful*, and Watkins's ingenious Afro-Cuban arrangement of *Girl From Ipanema*, to admire. Great band, amazing leader.

● Until Saturday. Information: 020 7439 0747.