

HIDDEN TREASURE AWAITS AT HISTORIC HAM HOUSE

THE MAGNIFICENT gardens of Ham House provide the setting for a summer of murder, romance and adventure.

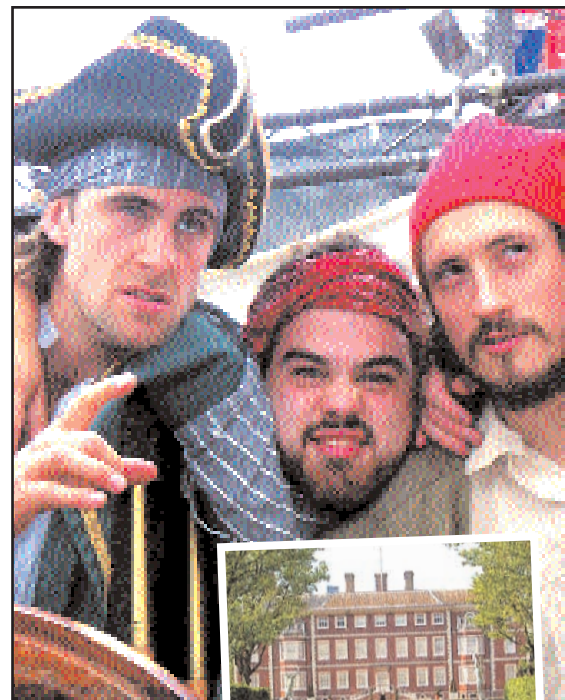
A trio of open-air performances begins next Sunday with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

Audiences at the 17th Century mansion in Ham Street, Ham, near Richmond will be asked to help Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson solve the baffling murder mystery.

Award-winning theatre troupe Illyria promise a 'spine-chilling' experience as the Victorian sleuths investigate the ancient curse of the Baskerville family and a mysterious beast.

Next up is *Romeo and Juliet*, on August 5, performed exactly as Elizabethan audiences would have seen it. The Lord Chamberlain's Men, named after Shakespeare's original theatre company, tell the Bard's tragic love story using authentic music, dance and costumes – plus an all-male cast.

Robert Louis Stevenson's classic adventure story *Treasure Island*, complete with live music, brings the



AHOY: Treasure Island, and inset, Ham House



season to a swashbuckling close on August 15.

Audiences can follow Jim Hawkins as he searches for the treasure of notorious pirate Captain Fleet, while trying to evade the terrifying villain Long John Silver. Guests are encouraged to bring rugs

and picnics. Performances begin at 7.30pm (gates open at 6.30pm).

Tickets cost £16 (children £12) and are available from the National Trust box office on 0870 428 8933 or at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/thamesandsolentevents

SPINNING: DJ Asif Gillani plays 333 in Old Street next week



FROM DEUCE TO LOVE OF DECKS

WHEN PETE TONG TELLS THE WORLD YOU'RE WORTH LISTENING TO, IT MUST BE RIGHT. CHRISTIAN McLAUGHLIN ASKED ASIF GILLANI HOW IT ALL BEGAN

THE FRESH sounds of one west London DJ have made music gurus from Pete Tong to Nitin Sawhney stand up and listen.

Asif Gillani, 26, whose latest single, *Ishq*, was hailed as one of the five tracks of the future on Pete Tong's *In New Music We Trust* show on BBC Radio One last month, has continued to ignite the music industry with his unique cross-cultural style.

Gillani, born to Pakistani parents, now lives in Perivale, west London. He said: "I thought I was going to be a professional table tennis player, but when I was 14 I saw my older sister Amber learning guitar at Holland Park School and I started too.

"In a year I had my own band, Starving Young. I've grown up in Western culture and my early influences were bands like Nirvana. We began making punk music and it wasn't until I came across Aki Nawaz's music label, Nation Records, with bands such as Fundamental, Asian Dub Foundation and Talvin Singh, that the other side of my cultural heritage awoke within me."

By the age of 18 his demo was picked up by Nawaz and he had embarked on a year-and-a-half-long tour supporting Fundamental with his second

band, All You Can Eat.

"My parents were quite surprised," he said. "But they had seen me practising every day, took me seriously, and gave me their support."

Nation Records is an offshoot of legendary south London indie label Beggars Banquet.

Gillani said: "I started to meet the right people and launched my present band, Fusing Naked Beats, with Martti Asweel, 25, in 2001.

Our second album, *Digital Asia*, was number one in Bobby Friction and Nihal's Radio One charts for more than five months – the most popular Asian-rooted album that year."

Witness of the World, their fourth album in as many years, was released in May.

Gillani said: "Being recognised by Pete Tong is

huge. He has millions of listeners and that's what we want. *Ishq* means love in Punjabi, and we want to spread that message as far as we can."

This philosophy was also embraced by Nitin Sawhney, who chose Asif as one of a select few musicians to perform at Aftershock, the three day collaborative workshop he ran at Watermans in May.

Gillani said: "We met at Watermans' excellent CINE networking events. He was an inspiration to work with and I also hope to also nurture young talent in the future.

"But for now I want to keep expanding internationally and carry on uniting people from different cultures with our sound."

● *Fusing Naked Beats will perform at India Electronica, Club 333, Old Street, EC1, on Tuesday, July 24. £5. From 8pm. For details, visit: www.fusingnakedbeats.com*

'I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE A PROFESSIONAL TABLE TENNIS PLAYER'

TIMELESS CLASSIC, MODERN MESSAGE

REVIEW

SAINT JOAN OLIVIER, NATIONAL THEATRE, SOUTH BANK

THE DANGER of religious fundamentalism conveyed in Bernard Shaw's Nobel prize-winning *Saint Joan* carries a timely warning in the National Theatre's Olivier auditorium.

A country girl in her late teens hears voices commanding her to drive the English from France and crown the reluctant dauphin as king. Her brutal campaign leads to Charles VII's coronation. But as one of the first Protestants, she threatens the fabric of feudal society and the Catholic Church across Europe. Within a year she is burnt at the stake as a heretic.

Few 20th Century plays capture a period in history (this is set in the 15th) so relevant to our troubled times. It is as if Shaw is offering an example and warning of what happens when church and state conspire to silence liberal ideas. It is particularly well conveyed in the unequal trial scene which pits Joan against an inquisitorial church, denying the girl any right to personal conscience.

A tragic drama, the show is imbued with Shaw's biting wit, illustrating his cynical view of religious hypocrisy, as when the Archbishop of Rheims comments: "Miracles are often contrivances by which priests fortify the faith of their flock." Later Richard, Earl of Warwick, crystallises Joan's dilemma with the remark: "Men cannot serve two masters." The ending is calculated to provoke lively religious debate.

In Marianne Elliott's absorbing production the revolving stage is in almost constant use, with minimal props. Armies march to battle by beating sheets of steel with batons, while soaring live choral music adds to the emotional impetus.

The superb central performance by Anne-Marie Duff as a gamine Joan, burning with earthly ambition and saintly self-belief as church and state close in to silence her, make this such an affecting production. She is ably supported by a strong NT ensemble, of whom Angus Wright as the steely Earl of Warwick, Finn Caldwell as the weak-willed dauphin, Paterson Joseph as the sly, cunning Bishop of Beauvais and Oliver Ford Davies as Joan's haughty inquisitor stand out.

● *Saint Joan is at the Olivier in the National Theatre complex. Box office: 020 7452 3000.*

Laurence Green