

# Wartime twitter is epic tale of love and war

## THEATRE

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The first touring production of the acclaimed World War I drama, *Birdsong*, comes to Milton Keynes Theatre from Monday.

Sebastian Faulk's wartime epic is an intimate story of love and sacrifice, a critically acclaimed story delivered with a taut cast that will entrance from start to finish.

'In pre-war France, young Englishman Stephen Wraysford embarks on a passionate and dangerous affair with his host's wife, Isabelle Azaire.

As civil unrest mounts and war breaks in on the idyll of his former life, Stephen finds he must now lead his men through the carnage of the Battle of the Somme and the sprawling tunnels that lie deep underground.

Faced with unprecedented horror, the war-hardened Stephen clings to the shrinking memory of Isabelle as his world explodes around him.' Rachel Wagstaff has adapted the work for the tour.

'*Birdsong* is an incredibly powerful novel, and through the story of Faulk's fictional characters, we can understand what it might have been like for individuals caught up in this most extraordinary period of world history,' she said. 'Given the approaching centenary and the passing away of Harry Patch, the last surviving British Army veteran to

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**'Lest we let suffering on such a scale ever happen again'**  
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have fought in the Great War, it seems more important than ever that the courage and sacrifices of those who fought and fell for future generations are not only remembered, but understood.

'Lest we forget; lest we let suffering on such a scale ever happen again.

And so to the aforementioned onstage team, and it is a cast of 12 who will keep your eyes stage bound.

Sarah Jayne Dunn, formerly of *Hollyoaks*, *Allo Allo* policeman ('Good Moaning'!) Arthur Bostrum and Charlie G Hawkins, who will be familiar to *EastEnders* fans, as Darren Miller, all star.

Tickets start at £10 rising to a top price of £25.

We should also mention that the tour is proud to support the Help for Heroes charity. Call the box office on 0844 871 7652.

Wave goodbye to choirs as you know them and say hello to The Spooky Men's Chorale at The Stables tonight, writes **Georgina Butler**.

This Australian macho juggernaut has a wide-ranging repertoire – from Georgian-style chants to acapella ballads – encompassing traditional

harmonies and wickedly off-the-wall sounds.

For a spicier sound, try Botton on Friday night when the chart-topping, hi-octane multicultural soul band will return to get audiences up on their feet doing the Bollywood Boogie.

This culture-clash musical experience combines the glamour of Bollywood with the charisma of soul music – imagine Aretha Franklin duetting with Kishore Kumar.

The always-in-demand Hamish Stuart shot to fame in the 1970s as the falsetto voice and guitarist of the Average White Band.

Glasgow-born Hamish continues to write and play live with The Hamish Stuart Band – check them out on Saturday. American Grammy-winning songwriter Patty Griffin is known for her stripped-down song writing style – she has perfected a folk-rocking country sound that is uniquely her own.

Experience her unmistakable and inimitable catalogue of work – including tracks from her 2013 album *American Kid* – on Tuesday when she performs her powerful, personal and unpredictable songs for The Stables crowd.

The legend of Queen lives on in Mercury, a band that recaptures the sight, sounds and emotions of Queen, with skilful instrumentation and perfect harmonies.

'The Show Must Go On' – and it will, at The Stables on Wednesday.

To make a booking call MK 280800.



**BIRDSONG, AT MK THEATRE FROM MONDAY: 'An intimate story of love and sacrifice...'**



**THE SPOOKY MEN'S CHORALE: 'An Australian macho juggernaut...'**

## FREE tickets for Shakespeare with Fourteentwentyone!

### TICKET GIVEAWAY

Milton Keynes Theatre is offering youngsters free tickets to *Henry VI*, showing at the theatre between Wednesday 7, and Saturday, June 10.

There is no catch, you simply need to be between the ages of 14 and 21 years old to enjoy the freebie.

Simples!  
In all, 1,421 free tickets are

available for the production, by The Globe Theatre on Tour, and you get them by calling the box office on 0844 871 7652 and quoting '1421', or pop along to the box office.

You will need to prove that you are aged between 14 and 21 though, by taking along a photo ID with proof of your date of birth when you collect the tickets.

'It's our ethos that theatre should be accessible to all,'



said Mike Keane, general manager at MK Theatre.

'The young people of today are our audiences of the future and are incredibly important to us,' he added.

## As You Like It, in the outdoors!

### THEATRE IN THE PARK

Immerse yourself in a Shakespearean love story of mistaken identities, love at first sight and a 'happy ever after' ending – all in the great outdoors.

The Parks Trust invites audiences to bring a picnic and enjoy a magical theatrical experience in Great Linford Manor Park on Friday for their open air theatre event.

Professional theatre company Illyria will perform Shakespeare's *As You Like It* in traditional dress, based on the style of the original 16th

Century touring companies. The performers are pros so the show will go ahead whatever the weather – be prepared for rain or shine.

Tickets are £12 for adults, £8 for children or £28 for a family of four and must be bought in advance, show time is 7.30pm. The show is suitable for youngsters aged eight and up. To purchase tickets, visit [www.theparkstrust.com](http://www.theparkstrust.com)

> Festive Road have created and devised Fair Play, showing at The Chrysalis Thea-

tre, Willen Park South, on Wednesday.

In brief, 'the characters tell the story of trade, taking the audience from the fields and power houses of past and present, to the most recent incarnations of market places; the disconnected shopping experience presented by faceless corporations.'

Hand held puppets, projections and larger than life characters bring the work to life. Tickets are £2 on the door, and the performances – lasting 30 minutes – are at 1.30pm and 7pm.