

What's On

Jazz hands at the ready for MK gig

STABLES ROUND-UP

BY GEORGINA BUTLER
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Music from a national treasure of the UK jazz scene will fill The Stables this evening.

The legendary Acker Bilk is unwell and not able to play tonight but his Paramount Band will be joined by outstanding clarinet player Ron Drake to perform Bilk's popular back catalogue.

> Celebrate that Friday feeling with the unique and powerful combination of a remarkable female vocalist and a virtuoso musician tomorrow with Curved Air.

> Also on Friday is the chance to catch local musician Joe Haig playing as part of pop-folk acoustic quartet Maia. Having just released their first four-track EP Finite World – the boys of Maia have much to look forward to - see below. > Richard Herring is not afraid to laugh in the face of death and his latest stand-up show We're All Going To Die, will have you in fits of mirth on Saturday.



DON'T MISS: Kyle Eastwood and his band, left, and Richard Herring, right, who appear at The Stables on Monday and Saturday, respectively

> Enjoy a relaxing Sunday morning from 11.30am in the company of a host of great names from the world of jazz for Jazz Matters – The Dance Band Era of the 50s with Barbara Jay.

> If chilled-out doesn't suit,

Panic Room arrive with their breathtaking, spine-tingling, all-rock music on Sunday evening.

> Start off the final week of April with Kyle Eastwood and his band on Monday as they return following a triumphant

appearance in Milton Keynes in 2013.

> And, finally, seven-piece band The Temperance Seven, specialises in playing 1920s-style jazz music. The Stables Box Office: MK 280 800

Brass band in a spring mood

IN CONCERT

Milton Keynes' oldest and longest running brass band is set to treat you to its very own Spring Concert this Saturday.

The Bradwell Silver Band was founded on January 15 1901 and many of its original members were from then rural Buckinghamshire towns such as Stantonbury and Bradwell while working at places such as Wolverton Works.

But today's membership sees people from a variety of different trades take part and the band is financed by the local community, a Supporters Club and fees received from a wide variety of engagements.

Stephanie Chappell, speaking on behalf of the Bradwell Silver Band, said: "We are strongly committed to our local community and Milton Keynes as a whole. "We invest strongly in our

Youth and Development Programme (free of charge) and will use our Spring Concert to focus on how our Development Band are progressing."

The concert at St James' Church, New Bradwell, begins at 7.30pm and tickets cost £6 or £5 concessions.

And if you just can't get enough of music concerts, then don't worry, there's more. The Milton Keynes Sinfonia will be holding a concert at St Mary's Church, Woburn on May 17.

The orchestra will be performing Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante. The talented soloists for this piece will come from the orchestra playing the oboe, clarinet, bassoon and French horn. Also being performed is Beethoven's popular Symphony No. 7 and a new piece (Concerto for Strings) composed by a local composer Keith Templeman.

Buy tickets on the door or by calling 01908 377518.



Brush shoulders with artist

ART

A largely self-taught artist whose work is highly sought after is stopping off at a city gallery to meet fans of his distinctive style.

Leigh Lambert is a versatile artist who creates in both watercolour and oil paint.

He is one of Buckingham Fine Art's most prestigious artists and his pieces are a popular choice among customers at AC Framing Gallery in the centre:mk.

Leigh will visit the gallery from 11am until 3pm on Saturday.

He will spend time meeting customers and dedicating any prints bought on the day.

Leigh's work is continually on display in the gallery – both originals and limited edition prints – and his work is always of interest to visitors.

Gallery manager, Tony James, said: "Virtually everybody that comes into the gallery falls in



DISTINCTIVE: Leigh Lambert piece entitled 'Catch Me If You Can'

love with Leigh's work so we are very proud to have him visiting us in Milton Keynes for the first time.

"His artwork has gone down a storm with our customers as it reminds so many of them of their pasts and where they grew up.

"The style and content has definitely caught people's attention – they love the mixture of the black and white with a splash of colour."

> Contact AC Framing Gallery on 01908 676626 for more information.

Folk stars Maia are heading back to where it all began

MUSIC

Sci-fi folk band, Maia, who have toured nationally for years, are making their Milton Keynes headline debut at The Stables on Friday night.

The quartet of multi-instrumentalists go through 13 instruments per set to create a full nu-folk sound.

Maia are well-known for their eclectic live performances and modern twist on traditional folk music. The audience at The Stables will be entertained by two 45-minute sets by the band, whose music makes it difficult to stay on your seat.

Trumpeter Joe Haig, who grew up in Milton Keynes, said: "We all met and created the band at University of Huddersfield five years ago.



"Now Maia is our full time job."

The band graduated in 2012 and have since moved to Leeds playing festivals throughout summer, including Hop Farm.

"Growing up in Milton Keynes and going to the Pitz every week made me believe that being a musician was a possible job opportunity.

"The Milton Keynes Music Service also taught me how to work with other musicians,

which has been essential to my work with Maia.

"I'm looking forward to playing at The Stables on Friday. "I used to volunteer there on the sound desk. It'll be great to play where I started out all those years ago."

Entry fee is £10 in advance and £12 on the door.

Maia released their latest EP 'Finite World' on Record Store Day in Leeds (April 19), which will be available on April 28.

Join super sleuth Poirot as he solves his first case

MK THEATRE

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Quintessential English entertainment is on offer at MK Theatre from Monday thanks to The Agatha Christie Theatre Company.

Milton Keynes Theatre welcomes a new production of 'Black Coffee' – the first ever piece crime novelist Agatha Christie wrote for the stage. Produced initially in 1930, Black Coffee introduces us to the inimitable detective Hercule Poirot as he finds himself entwined in the intricacies of his very first case. Black Coffee blends all the necessary ingredients required for a rich and intense whodunnit. The narrative begins as an archetypal country estate is suddenly thrown into chaos

Get ready for intrigue and suspense with Black Coffee

following the murder of eccentric inventor Sir Claud Amory. Arriving at the estate just moments later, the mysterious Poirot immediately senses a potent brew of despair, treachery and deception amid the estate's occupants. In true super sleuth style he sets to work to decipher the clues and solve this curious case. From his debut in 'Black Coffee', Poirot went on to become one of the world's most cherished fictional characters, appearing in 33 novels, one play and more than 50 short stories published between 1920 and 1975.

The diminutive Belgian investigator is one of the most famous detectives of all time and the only fictional character to ever receive a full-page obituary in the New York Times. His legend has proved ripe for adaptations on television, radio and on screen so finding a suitable Poirot had to be a crucial element of staging this latest reincarnation. Fortunately for fans, one of Britain's most instantly recognisable actors, Robert Powell, will star as the moustached hero. Robert is supported by a cast including Agatha Christie Company regulars Liza Goddard (Bergerac, Give Us A Clue), Gary Mavers (Peak Practice) and Ben Nealon (Soldier Soldier). Get ready for intrigue and suspense with Black Coffee which runs at Milton Keynes Theatre from Monday until Saturday, May 3. To book call 0844 871 7652 or visit www.atgtickets.com/miltonkeynes.



WHODUNNIT: Robert Powell, heads up a formidable cast when he takes on the role of Hercule Poirot in an adaptation of Agatha Christie's Black Coffee

Cracking story was the appeal says actor who admits to not being a fan of Agatha Christie

INTERVIEW

BY STEVE MILLS
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There's no mystery to actor Robert Powell's pedigree, who as one of Britain's most celebrated actors will be donning the famous moustache when he plays one of the most famous fictional detectives.

The actor is well known for appearances in Jesus of Nazareth, The 39 Steps, Doomwatch and The Detectives. But Powell admits he was not a huge fan of Agatha Christie before he took on the part of Poirot.

He said: "I am not a big fan of Agatha Christie and have never read any of her books. They are just not my cup of tea. "But prior to becoming Poirot, I read the first book The Mysterious Affair at Styles at the recommendation of my daughter. I actually enjoyed it and was useful for playing Poirot."

Actors including David Suchet and Peter Ustinov have played the part in the past but Powell avoided seeing any other portrayals of the detective.

He added: "I think I wanted to respond to the script without any other influence. I liked the lines and thought it was a cracking good story. That appealed to the part. "I think people will find this



Distinguished career: Robert Powell stars in Black Coffee



version of Poirot has got a sense of humour which some people think has been forgotten in other adaptations." After years of being a straight actor, Powell appeared in the sitcom The Detectives which he enjoyed enormously. Robert said: "People often said this that on the back of Doomwatch, I ended up playing leading men with little laughs.

"However, I told Jasper when I was making the show that I have been making people laugh before he did with the stand up. "I know there were a lot of people who thought it was a risk especially as Jasper hadn't done a lot of acting, but it was a lot of fun and we enjoyed ourselves when we were filming."

No confusing talent on show

STANTON BURY THEATRE

Young performers will explore the problem of loneliness with a series of five interconnected one-act plays tomorrow evening. Stagestruck Youth Theatre is bringing Alan Ayckbourn's 1974 play Confusions to Stantonbury Theatre's stage and the show looks set to engage and entertain. An ensemble of five people depict a house-bound wife and mother, a man propping up a bar, two couples dining in a restaurant, the gossip-worthy happenings at a village fete and a talk in a park. The scenes are loosely linked by characters or locations but more subtly through the common underlying themes of obsession, isolation and the undeniable human desire for



Scene from Our Country's Good

companionship. Characters throughout are immediately familiar and their loneliness remarkably easy to relate to. Curtain up > Also showing at Stantonbury Theatre is Our Country's Goodby Timberlake Wertenbaker. The play will mark the

tenth anniversary of theatre company Pepper's Ghost which is renowned in Milton Keynes for its high production values. Pepper's Ghost is an inclusive company and anyone who has an interest in theatre can join and work with a fully professional production team. Our Country's Good tells the true story of the first penal colony in Australia and a young, ambitious lieutenant, Ralph Clark, who agrees to direct a play with the convicts in the main roles as a means of getting noticed and possibly a promotion. It's on from May 14-17 at 7.30pm with a matinee on May 17 at 2pm. Tickets are £12 and £10 (concessions) from 01908 324466 or online www.stantonburytheatre.co.uk > Also see www.peppersghost.uk.com