

Wounded – the emotional story of two soldiers fighting a century apart

Posted on Monday 29th October 2012

Wounded

The REP @ TA Centre, Dawberry Fields Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 6NY

Tuesday 30 October – Saturday 10 November



As British military casualties continue to return from the war in Afghanistan, *Wounded* - an emotional new play by Jenny Stephens - tells the stories of two soldiers, fighting a century apart, but both coping with the aftermath of war. Informed by University of Birmingham research into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, as well as military medical practice in modern conflicts and the First World War, this timely and heart-warming site-specific play takes place at the Territorial Army Field Hospital in Kings Heath, Birmingham from October 30 to November 10.

Set in 1917 and 2012, *Wounded* follows the stories of Combat Medical Technician Kate Mulligan and Private Alfred Seddon. Nearly one hundred years after the Great War, Kate Mulligan is treated in the same military hospital that nursed injured soldiers during the First World War. Wracked with guilt that she caused her own injuries and the life-threatening injuries of another soldier who tried to save her, Kate begins to experience strange goings on. Perhaps it's the shock, or maybe Kate really can see and hear Private Alfred Seddon. The two soldiers remember and revisit their experiences, allowing them to explore their trauma and help each other recover.

Working with the University of Birmingham, writer Jenny Stephens became increasingly aware of the parallels between the plight of injured soldiers a century apart:

"Living in Birmingham we're painfully aware of the trauma of war, particularly with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's role in the rehabilitation of soldiers who have been terribly injured in war zones, including Iraq and Afghanistan."

Stephens also began to understand the very personal stories behind the medical records:

"I became really interested in how individuals might cope with the trauma of combat in what are, supposedly, very different conflicts. But I soon realised that today's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is basically 'shellshock' by a different name. Thankfully sufferers are no longer shot as cowards, as they often were during the First World War. But the effects can still be devastating."

Dr Jonathan Reinartz, Director of the University's History of Medicine Unit, said "It was a true pleasure to work with Jenny Stephens and the Birmingham Rep throughout this project. Jenny was an ideal selection for this piece - she engaged with the history and regularly corresponded with our historical team and continually sent us drafts of the play as it developed. It was a fascinating process from start to finish and we all learned a huge amount from the experience"

The cast for *Wounded* includes Daniel Anderson (Captain Jones), Ben Callon (Alfie Seddon), John Flitcroft (Jacko / Dr Carter), Emma Rollason (Kate Mulligan) and Maisie Turpie (Nurse Gertie Robinson / Rosie Seddon).

Wounded is supported by a Wellcome Trust Arts Award.

Following its premiere in Birmingham, *Wounded* will play for students at Imperial College London and the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

Listings Information

Wounded: The REP @ TA Centre, Dawberry Fields Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 6NY

Tuesday 30 October – Saturday 10 November

After Dark discussion: Thursday 8 November 7.00pm

BSL Interpreted Performance: Thursday 8 November, 7.00pm with Mary Connell.

Box Office: 0121 236 4455 Book Online: www.birmingham-rep.co.uk (<http://www.birmingham-rep.co.uk>)

Notes to Editors

- **The Wellcome Trust** is a global charitable foundation dedicated to achieving extraordinary improvements in human and animal health. It supports the brightest minds in biomedical research and the medical humanities. The Trust's breadth of support includes public engagement, education and the application of research to improve health. It is independent of both political and commercial interests. www.wellcome.ac.uk (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/>)
- **University of Birmingham Medical School** - From the time of the Lunar Society in the mid to late eighteenth century, to the Institute for Biomolecular Research that opened in the spring of 2004, Birmingham has had a long and proud history of medical education, practice and scientific discovery. The hospitals and the Medical School, through its various guises has produced some of the greatest and best known figures in British Medical History and Birmingham doctors and medical scientists have made a number of important discoveries. Find out more: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/mds/centres/histmed/resources/history.aspx> (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/mds/centres/histmed/resources/history.aspx>)
- **The History of Medicine Unit** plays an important part in the understanding of the progress and current dilemmas facing modern biomedical science and clinical practice today. As a result of the Unit's location, the staff and students are able to develop a high level of interaction with clinicians and medical scientists, which influences the design and execution of research strategies and the dissemination of research.
- Members of the press are invited to the press night on Thursday, November 1.