

THE TWO WORLDS OF CHARLIE F.

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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

PRESS RELEASE

A MAJOR NEW TOUR OF

THE TWO WORLDS OF CHARLIE F

BY OWEN SHEERS

STARRING WOUNDED, INJURED AND SICK EX SERVICE PERSONNEL

TO OPEN ON 10 MARCH 2014

FOLLOWING A TWO-WEEK SEASON IN TORONTO

I am so proud and overwhelmed. It is the most moving play I've seen for a long, long time. The public should get behind this and be part of something unforgettable.

Ray Winstone

In the centenary anniversary of the outbreak of World War 1, the play ***The Two Worlds of Charlie F***, which was first performed in January 2012 at two charity fund-raising evenings at the Theatre Royal Haymarket, will start a new UK tour in 2014, preceded by a two-week run at the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto, Canada. The tour, which will be supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, will be supporting The Royal British Legion by raising funds at each performance. It will be performed by medically discharged military personnel, as well as professional actors.

The Two Worlds of Charlie F was the idea of Alice Driver, the then Masterclass Creative Producer and now the Executive Producer of this new tour. Her initial idea was to provide a unique work placement for serving wounded, injured and sick (WIS) military personnel within a theatre company. This was the first time that the MOD had allowed a theatre company access

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to their wounded soldiers and led to workshops and interviews with the WIS service personnel from the war in Afghanistan, which, in turn, led to a play being created through the partnership of The Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust, The Royal British Legion and Defence Recovery Capability, written by the award-winning poet and playwright Owen Sheers. The play was rehearsed and performed on stage at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London's West End for two sold-out performances. The play then went on a short UK tour, visiting Birmingham, Cardiff and Edinburgh, and won the Amnesty International Award for Freedom of Expression 2012. The production was directed by Stephen Rayne with the support of patron Trevor Nunn. The other two patrons were Ray Winstone, the project ambassador, and recently retired General Sir David Richards, Chief of Defence Staff. It received five-star reviews, full houses and standing ovations wherever it played.

A documentary commissioned by Alan Yentob and made by UpperCut Films looked at the process of creating and staging ***The Two Worlds of Charlie F.*** Called *Theatre of War*, it was first shown on BBC1's *Imagine...* and is currently nominated for The Grierson Documentary Awards.

The Two Worlds of Charlie F. is a soldier's view of service, injury and recovery. Moving from the war in Afghanistan, through the dream world of morphine-induced hallucinations to the physio rooms of Headley Court, the play explores the consequences of injury, both physical and psychological, and its effects on others as the soldiers fight to win the new battle for survival at home. The play is a very personal and very moving look at the effects of war on individual combatants, but it also has a huge amount of humour and humanity.

Writer Owen Sheers is the author of two collections of poetry, *The Blue Book* and *Skirrid Hill*, a work of narrative non-fiction about Zimbabwe, *The Dust Diaries*, a novel, *Resistance*, and a novella, *White Ravens*. In 2011, he wrote the script for the National Theatre of Wales's *The Passion*, directed by and starring Michael Sheen. His verse drama *Pink Mist*, commissioned by BBC Radio 4, was published by Faber and won the Hay Medal for Poetry 2013.

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The cast will include ex-servicemen and women Bombardier (Rtd) Gareth Crabbe, Rifleman (Rtd) Daniel Shaw, Darren “Swift” Swift, Marine Cassidy Little and Lieutenant Col (Rtd) Stewart Hill, with further casting to be announced. Marine Cassidy Little, who plays the title role of Marine Charlie Fowler, was born in Canada and studied performance art in the United States. He then did stand-up comedy in Britain before joining the Marines (as the result of a bet). Cassidy lost a leg in his second tour of Afghanistan.

The Two Worlds of Charlie F will be directed once again by Stephen Rayne, with music by Jason Carr, design by Anthony Lamble, lighting and projection design by Will Reynolds, sound by Colin Pink and choreography by Lilly Phillips.

A new production company, **The Charlie F Project (UK) Ltd**, has been created by Garry McQuinn and Amanda Faber to produce this new tour. Garry's producing credits include the international hit shows *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* and *Tap Dogs*. Amanda is a film and television producer, who produced the feature film of Owen Sheers's award-winning novel *Resistance*. She was also a director at the BBC.

LISTINGS INFORMATION

THE TWO WORLDS OF CHARLIE F

By Owen Sheers

Tickets: Check venues for details. £10 tickets available for Service Personnel in each venue. Local restrictions apply.

www.charlie-f.com

Twitter: @CharlieF_Tour

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CharlieFTour>

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Amanda Malpass PR, 25 Floral Street, London, WC2E 9DF
Tel: 020 7031 8188 Email: info@amandamalpass.com

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TOUR DATES 2014

25 February – 8 March	Princess of Wales Theatre, Toronto, Canada	
13-15 March	Aylesbury Waterside Theatre	0844 871 7607
17-22 March	Richmond Theatre	0844 871 7651
26 - 29 March	Wolverhampton Grand	01902 42 92 12
31 March – 5 April	Forum Theatre Malvern	01684 892 277
14-19 April	Nottingham Theatre Royal	0115 989 5555
28 April – 3 May	Newcastle Theatre Royal	0844 811 2121
6-10 May	Norwich Theatre Royal	01603 63 00 00
19-21 May	Wycombe Swan	01494 512 000
22-24 May	G Live Guildford	0844 7701 797
26-31 May	Mercury Theatre Colchester	01206 573948
2-7 June	Truro Hall for Cornwall	01872 262 466

NOTES TO EDITOR

1. The original project brought together 30 wounded, injured and sick (WIS) service personnel under the guidance of a professional team to write a new play, *The Two Worlds of Charlie F.* Its objectives were to boost confidence, self-esteem and to give a voice to this group of individuals and provide work experience opportunities.

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2. The process of creating and staging *The Two Worlds of Charlie F* was fully evaluated by Leeds Met University. The evaluation showed its original objectives were surpassed and for many of the individuals taking part the experience was life changing. The partnership between The Royal British Legion and The Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust was nominated for an award at The Third Sector Business Excellence Awards.
3. The Royal British Legion and The Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust decided to take the play on a tour of the UK in the summer of 2012 to ensure the general public had an opportunity to see this production and continue the welfare aspect of the project and work experience opportunity.
4. The Charlie F Project is providing an opportunity for the award-winning play and its key messages to be heard by more people in the 100-year anniversary of World War 1. It will provide paid employment opportunities for all the original service personnel who are now veterans.