



News Release

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CLEVELAND, OH- “The Thorn” takes its epic story of God’s love for the world on a 21-city US tour including Cleveland with two performances at Playhouse Square on September 24 & 25, 2024. Shows will begin at 7:00 p.m. Tickets for all performances are available online at playhousesquare.org or by calling 216-241-6000.

“The Thorn,” a powerful and popular live theatrical event, seen live by over one million people, will bring the passion of Jesus to life this spring with over 50 performances spanning the country from Spokane to Miami. This follows a tour in the Fall of 2023, consisting of nearly all sold out shows.

The Thorn offers audiences a unique theatrical experience in a show that has been hailed as “Cirque meets ‘The Passion’” thanks to its compelling mix of drama, music, dance, martial arts, aerial acrobatics, emotionally evocative performances, and timeless spiritual perspectives. The story spans from creation to the formation of the early church.

Author John Bolin created the show 25 years ago to convey the meaning of Christ’s sacrificial death to a group of young people who knew little about the story of Jesus’ suffering but were familiar with pain through their own practice of cutting and self-harm.

The show has evolved ever since, with the current live version returning to the original format featuring St. John, “the beloved disciple,” recalling his many amazing encounters with Jesus.

“It’s a story full of love, sacrifice, spiritual warfare, and redemption,” said Bolin.

Meet “The Thorn” creators

“The Thorn” creator John Bolin, says God called him: “to tell stories on the page, stage, and screen,” an assignment he has now completed with the film version of “The Thorn.” His books include novels (*The Eden Project*) and Christian growth guides (*So Loved*, *The Two Doors of Heaven*, and *Life Unlimited*).

John’s wife, Sarah Bolin helped create the show and is the Executive Producer, managing the show’s national touring troupes. When asked about why she tours and has participated in “The Thorn” for so long, Sarah said, “God asked us to trust him and open our hands, and he promised to make something beautiful happen.” Over the years, Sarah has been witness to seeing God move in tangible ways across audience and cast members alike.

Sponsors

“The Thorn” partners with Compassion International, a child sponsorship and Christian humanitarian aid organization, headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO, the same town “The Thorn” was created in. In an effort to assist in the sustainable development of children living in poverty around the world, Compassion works with the local church to provide food, clothing, education, healthcare, discipleship and more. With a partnership spanning over 12 years, “The Thorn” is proud to have the touring cast and audiences be

participants in seeing thousands of children sponsored and is expectant to see many more sponsored this Spring.

Jesus trending

Although polls show that U.S. church attendance is declining, interest in Jesus is growing. “The Chosen,” the popular streaming series about Jesus, has racked up over 400 million episode views.

“As I first saw with my students 25 years ago, people who may have jaundiced views of Christians or churches are more open to learning about who the real Jesus was, how he lived, and what he taught,” said Bolin.

While previous incarnations of “The Thorn” live show have been performed mostly at churches, the new touring model makes the show available to everyone at mainstream performing arts venues and arenas.

“Jesus believes in accessibility,” said Bolin. “He wants everyone to have access to the ultimate story of love and hope. That’s why he came to earth in the first place.”

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Playhouse Square, home to the largest Broadway season ticket holder community in North America, is Northeast Ohio's destination for entertainment. A not-for-profit performing arts center, Playhouse Square is a champion of arts education and downtown Cleveland, and proud to be the home of The City Club of Cleveland, Cleveland Ballet, Cleveland International Film Festival, Cleveland Play House, Cleveland State University Department of Theatre and Dance, DANCECleveland, Great Lakes Theater and Tri-C JazzFest.