

WILL'S BIRTHDAY BASH: SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY EVENTS THIS APRIL

19-26 APRIL 2020: Guildford Shakespeare Company announce their annual programme of events celebrating the birthday of William Shakespeare, 23 April.

As well as being St George's Day, 23 April is widely recognised as the day on which William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564. For the last 9 years, Guildford's award-winning Shakespeare company have been marking the occasion with a series of sell-out special events in and around the town, including their popular Sonnet Walk Weekend.

This year's events start with the **GSC YOUNG COMPANY (19–20 April)** whose production is devised by the company of 12-18-year olds and based on three of the plays GSC staged in 2019: *Measure for Measure*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Last year the Young Company took over Guildford's historic Guildhall with a promenade experience, and audiences can expect a similarly immersive show in 2020.

On Shakespeare's Birthday itself (**23 April**), this year's special staged reading is **TROILUS & CRESSIDA**, a passionate story of love and betrayal. Featuring some very famous characters from ancient history – Achilles, Helen of Troy, Ajax – Shakespeare's 1603 play is a brilliant combination of Homer's *The Illiad* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.

Birthday celebrations conclude on the following weekend with the 9th Annual **SONNET WALK WEEKEND (25-26 April)**. Akin to a treasure hunt, timed groups set off with a map to discover Shakespeare being performed in the most unexpected of places. As usual the route will be kept under wraps until the actual weekend.

"Shakespeare is our national poet and as such it is important that we can all celebrate his birthday, and it not just be the preserve of London or Stratford," explains Co-Founder MATT PINCHES. *"This mini festival enables people to engage with Shakespeare in a bite-size, fun and affordable way. The reading is a great way to discover a lesser-known gem, whilst the Young Company is a wonderful opportunity for our actors of tomorrow to publicly flex their talents. I love curating the Sonnet Walks as they combine an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the treasures of the Sonnets and some of the best-loved speeches, as well as Guildford's smaller nooks and crannies that people might not otherwise think of visiting. It's a real community celebration."*

BOOKING INFO

Priority Booking **10 March** | General Booking **17 March**

Tickets

YOUNG COMPANY	£10
TROILUS & CRESSIDA	£15
SONNET WALKS	£16

No concessions | No booking fees

www.guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk

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Note to Editors

Guildford Shakespeare Company is an award-winning, site-responsive theatre company. Established in 2006 by actor-managers Sarah Gobran and Matt Pinches, it has produced over 40 immersive shows in unique venues including Guildford Cathedral, Watts Gallery, West Horsley Place and an antique Flemish Spiegelent. In 2015, Brian Blessed OBE played the title role in *King Lear*. During the last 13 years the company has expanded its Education and Outreach, now working with over 5000 people young and old every year through classes and in-school workshops. It also creates and delivers free-to-access social inclusion programmes across Surrey for some of the most disadvantaged parts of the community. GSC is one of the largest producers of home-grown theatre in the region.

