

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS, RE-IMAGINED

4 - 7 June 2020: The award-winning Guildford Shakespeare Company (GSC) have joined forces with the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford and Jermyn Street Theatre, London, to bring their 2015 adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's endearing classic to online audiences next month.

GSC first staged the story in June 2015 amidst the gardens and woods of Watts Gallery at the foot of the Surrey Hills. Adapted by GSC's Associate Playwright, **Ant Stones**, the production was a promenade performance which also featured a full-size 1920 Humber motor car. This adaptation of the 1908 family classic is now being re-imagined for audiences to enjoy from their own homes.

GSC has met with recent success with a series of sell-out online Murder Mystery 'parties', created and delivered by their own in-house team. The 2015 *Willows* script is being revised for six actors and will once again be directed by **Tom Littler** who directed the original production. The 75-minute show will also include elements of audience participation ensuring the immersive style of GSC's work continues on this new platform.

MATT PINCHES, GSC Co-Founder: *"We're a site-responsive theatre company, so given the current change in our theatrical landscape, we're excited to be exploring this new 'site-specific' context of live theatre online. Our Murder Mystery audiences clearly relished being able not only to look forward to a social event and connect with friends and family as in a real theatre, but also expressed a great desire to support their local arts organisations. We're thrilled to be able to share this production with the audiences of our good friends at Jermyn Street and the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre."*

JOANNA READ, Director and Chief Executive of the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre: *'The Yvonne Arnaud and Guildford Shakespeare have worked together on many productions over the years. We're pleased to be a part of this foray into producing online performance and exploring new ways of working with them, and with Jermyn Street Theatre. Collaboration is more important now than ever, and we are sure our audiences will welcome this adventurous production.'*

TOM LITTLER, Artistic Director of Jermyn Street Theatre (JST), who also directs, said: *"Kenneth Grahame's enchanting story has been a favourite for grown-ups and children alike for over a century. It's a novel about the gifts of friendship. Many of us use Zoom for a meeting or a family birthday, but now we're going to transform it into a place of magic, wonder, and some very naughty weasels. I can't wait to get back to the Wild Wood and the riverbank."*

The cast includes **SALLY CHENG** (*Love's Labour's Lost*, GSC 2018; *For Services Rendered*, JST 2019) as Mole, **ROBERT MOUNTFORD** (*All's Well That Ends Well*, GSC & JST 2019) as Ratty; **JOHANNE MURDOCK** (*Julius Caesar*, GSC 2017; original cast of *Willows*) as Weasel; **CHRIS PORTER** (*Love's Labour's Lost* GSC 2018; original cast of *Willows*) as Badger; **SARAH GOBRAN** and **MATT PINCHES** (GSC Actor-Managers) as Fox and Mr Toad.

STORY COPY: Join the enchanting Ratty, Mole, Badger and reckless Mr Toad, as they do battle with the wicked Chief Weasel and sly Mr Fox. Motor-cars, boats and the battle for Toad Hall are all re-imagined in this unique LIVE performance. Luncheon baskets at the ready. Poop Poop!!

TICKETS AND DATES

Thursday 4 June	7pm
Friday 5 June	3pm & 7pm
Saturday 6 June	3pm & 7.30pm
Sunday 7 June	3pm & 7pm

Performances timed to accommodate families and home-schooling

Tickets **£20 per device** (max two people per device) and are strictly limited.

Running Time **75 mins** (approx.)

Box Office opens **Monday 18 May, 10am.**

Booking via **GSC Box Office ONLY** www.guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk/onlineshows/#willows

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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 shows in unique venues including Guildford Cathedral, Watts Gallery, West Horsley Place and a Flemish Spiegeltent. In 2015, Brian Blessed OBE played the title role in *King Lear*. Its Education and Outreach works with over 5000 people young and old every year including free-to-access social inclusion programmes. GSC is one of the largest producers of home-grown theatre in the region.

Jermyn Street Theatre is the smallest producing theatre in central London. Established in 1994, it has transferred productions to the West End and Broadway, and coproduces with theatres across the UK and the world. Its work has won numerous Critic's Choice and OffWestEnd Awards. It is currently running the Brave New World Season of digital and remotely created work for isolated audiences.

The **Yvonne Arnaud Theatre** is a regional theatre with a national reach. Its mission is to produce and present vibrant, outstanding, entertaining drama for the many communities of Surrey, the South East and beyond. With a busy studio space, youth theatre and engagement programme, the theatre is an artistic resource and a cultural hub, delivering the thrill and delight of live theatre.