

GSC AND OCTAGON TO STAGE VIRTUAL DREAM

24–27 SEPTEMBER: The award-winning Guildford Shakespeare Company (GSC) and Bolton's Octagon Theatre present a live online adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM is Shakespeare's best loved comedy, featuring four young lovers who find themselves lost in a mystical wood populated by warring fairies, mischievous sprites and an earnest group of amateur actors, one of whom seems to have grown a donkey's head...

Following the phenomenal success of GSC's online live shows in May and June, the Surrey-based theatre company have teamed up with one of the North-West's premier producing theatres to bring another live adaptation into the living-rooms of audiences North and South.

A Midsummer Night's Dream will be an especial adaptation based on GSC's 2017 open air production (*Essential Surrey* ★★★★★; "*Infectious humour and feel-good optimism*" *The Stage* ★★★★★). The original show, set in the 1960s, was directed by **LOTTE WAKEHAM**, who is now the Artistic Director of the Octagon Theatre Bolton, and returns to direct this online version.

GSC approached Lotte and the Octagon earlier in the summer when they were working out how to follow the success of their online live adaptation of *The Wind in the Willows* (produced in assoc. with Jermyn Street Theatre and the Yvonne Arnaud). *Willows* was seen by over 600 households across the world and, alongside interactive Murder Mysteries and original free content, formed a key part of the GSC's online lockdown programme.

MATT PINCHES, GSC Co-Founder: "*Our especially made online events have proved incredibly popular and it has been joyous to see families and friends able to come together to share a live experience in these toughest of times. We desperately wanted to stage a Shakespeare play in this format and Dream, with its accessible storyline, beautiful speeches and laugh-out-loud comedy, was an obvious choice. Lotte had directed a truly magical show for us in 2017 and so it seemed a natural union to make with Bolton. Two theatres, working together for their communities whilst sharing new ideas and best practices, was an opportunity not to be missed.*"

LOTTE WAKEHAM, Artistic Director of the Octagon: "*We've had fantastic feedback from our audiences about other online content produced by the Octagon during lockdown, so it felt like a natural next step to try a full production, live on Zoom! A Midsummer Night's Dream is a favourite with our audiences, and this 75-minute version will be perfect for all ages. I'm delighted to be collaborating with Guildford Shakespeare Company again, who truly are experts in this field of Zoom productions. I'm also very excited to be working with a brilliant cast of northern and southern actors, who I'm confident will provide a magical evening of entertainment for our audiences.*"

The 75-minute show will feature a cast of six actors, four of whom – **JACK WHITAM, EMMA FENNEY, SARAH GOBRAN, MATT PINCHES** - will be reprising their roles from 2017. They are joined by **MISHA DUNCAN-BARRY**, who has recently performed with Northern Broadsides and was in last year's acclaimed *Hamlet* at Manchester's Hope Mill Theatre and **NATHAN IVES-MOIBA**, who appeared in GSC's *Macbeth* back February this year and also won the 'Best Newcomer Award' at the Manchester Theatre Awards for his performance in *Tull* at the Octagon.

TICKETS - DATES -TIMES

Thursday 24 September	7pm
Friday 25 September	7.30pm
Saturday 26 September	3pm, 7.30pm
Sunday 27 September	3pm, 7pm

Tickets **£20 per device** (max two people per device) See website for multiple booking details.

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

Box Office opens **Wednesday 3 September, 11am**

GUILDFORD BOX OFFICE www.guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk

BOLTON BOX OFFICE www.octagonbolton.co.uk or 01204 520661

PRESS CONTACT (Guildford only)

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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 Depts work 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.

Octagon Theatre Bolton is a regional producing theatre that makes popular, bold and adventurous theatre of the highest quality. We believe theatre matters because everyone's story matters and aim to entertain, inspire and engage as many people as possible through theatre. We are leaders in ensuring arts and culture thrive in Bolton working with thousands of young people and community groups every year. The Octagon is currently undergoing a multi-million pound redevelopment and is producing a series of shows and activities in venues across Bolton before the new building opens in 2020. The redevelopment is the largest transformation of the building in the Octagon's history and will ensure the future of the Theatre for generations to come – find out more at octagonbolton.co.uk/reimagined. **Artistic Director Lotte Wakeham**