

2021: LET'S BUILD ON THE SUCCESSES OF LAST YEAR

This morning, as news of violence at the US Capitol building was reported along with another horrendous number of deaths in the UK from coronavirus, we received this email from an audience member about *A Christmas Carol*...

"Here in the U.S. we have been glued to the TV and watching the U.S. Capitol under siege. This violence on top of the Covid surge has made our already heavy hearts even heavier. [A Christmas Carol] brought both smiles to our faces and tears to our eyes."

Theatre is about sharing; stories and memories, fears and ambitions. It is about sharing an experience with loved ones and friends. It is about sharing our thoughts and opinions with the world around us and discovering new ways of seeing it. This pandemic has stopped so much of that; but in our own small way, we hope GSC has created the possibility for people and communities to remain connected.

"We watched it here in Seoul, South Korea... made me feel close to home at a time when it's not possible to be back in Glasgow with my family... the most wonderful Christmas gift I could have asked for." Online audience member

Despite the almost complete closure of theatres, over the last nine months GSC are proud to have produced 6 original live online productions, seen by over 3300 households across the UK and around the world.

Together with an open-air production in August, and the continuance of our outreach work, we created over 80 freelance jobs for artists, as well as generating 905 minutes of free content on YouTube. For the primary and secondary schools we would normally tour to, three original 60-minute film adaptations were made of three Shakespeare plays. We also launched a free mental health project, a creative writing course and new Podcast channel.

These months have been particularly difficult for young people, so we made it a priority to ensure as many of our in-house drama clubs could continue as possible, thereby supporting children and their families.

"XXXX loves GSC, and we, as a family, are so incredibly impressed with the generosity of GSC... you give so much to the community and to all these aspiring youngsters... The theatre and the Arts is special, and XXXX is so lucky to have found GSC." Student parent

We know that GSC is not alone in working hard to continue delivering this kind of provision. It has been so encouraging to see the diverse innovations made by theatremakers in *The Stage 100* published today, which recognises those who have gone above and beyond.

So, despite the dirge of daily news bulletins, continued restrictions on our daily lives and the unpredictability of any sort of planning, let's start 2021 by focussing on the successes of what we have all managed to achieve and how we can build on them for our communities. It's messages like this that will get us all through...

"It's amazing how it seems like it doesn't matter what life throws your way - you find the opportunities and silver lining and run with it!" Online audience member

Press Contact: Matt Pinches

matt@guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk / 07971 234141



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 Spiegel tent. 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.