

OPEN-AIR SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT

17 JUNE – 31 JULY

Guildford Shakespeare Company are announcing their return to the stage with their postponed open-air season from last year, featuring **SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER** and **AS YOU LIKE IT**.

Surrey's award-winning theatre company kick-off their outdoor season in June with Oliver Goldsmith's sublime Georgian comedy of manners, one of the best-loved and most-performed of English comedies.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER takes place over the course of a single night, when a when Marlow, a debonair man-about-town, is led to believe that his future bride's rural family home (the Hardcastles, whom he has never met), is in fact a country inn. When confronted with the elegant Kate Hardcastle, Marlow's swagger melts away, and so to conquer his heart and keep up the pretence, the tenacious Kate poses as a barmaid.

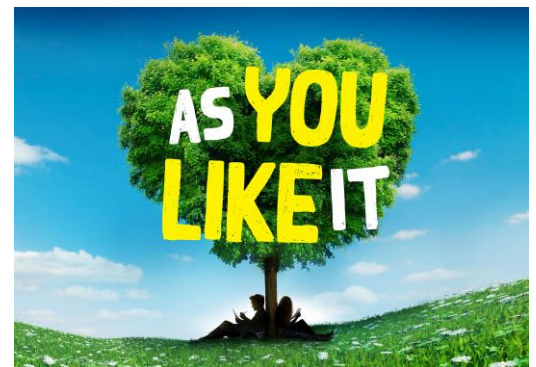
Director **TOM LITTLER**, Artistic Director of Jermyn Street Theatre, London, returns to Guildford following his 2019 production of *All's Well That Ends Well* ('A beautiful, magical production. 5 stars doesn't do it justice.' – London Theatre 1), which was GSC's first London transfer, and was nominated for five Off-West Awards.

This production transports the play to the 'bright young things' country house world of *Jeeves and Wooster*, complete with fearsome aunts, hapless young men, determined debutantes and hilarious misunderstandings.

In July, the company moves to the former chalk quarry in Guildford's town centre for Shakespeare's **AS YOU LIKE IT**. Now a luscious green, wooded space, Racks Close will be a fitting setting for Shakespeare's Forest of Arden and its free-thinking heroine, Rosalind. Possibly Shakespeare's happiest play and containing some of his most memorable lines and phrases, *As You Like It* is a sunny celebration of human nature's desire to forgive and forget, to love and to laugh.

CAROLINE DEVLIN follows her hugely popular *The Merry Wives of Windsor* from 2019 ("Pure enjoyment from beginning to end" British Theatre Guide), with a 1930s-set production, where the Brown Shirt-inspired Duke Frederick has created a society of conformity or death. Against this backdrop of Fascist oppression, Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone escape to the Forest of Arden, a playground of hopes and dreams, where freedom of thought liberates and unites. Both productions will be designed by long-time GSC collaborator **NEIL IRISH**.

MATT PINCHES (GSC Co-Founder and Producer): "Like all theatres and theatre company's we have been waiting for this moment when we can finally be with our audiences once again, in person. Being able to announce a return to the stage and the open-air is a huge gear-change for us all and we cannot wait to welcome people back, safely and securely. We are so looking forward to sharing the joys of live performance once again, and these two fabulously frivolous feel-good plays will be the perfect tonic."





Press Release

Date: **01 APRIL 2021** Use: **IMMEDIATE**
GSC Honorary Patron **Brian Blessed OBE**

In August 2020 GSC piloted Guildford's only outdoor event in association with Guildford Borough Council, bringing over 800 people to the town's Castle Gardens. During the last 12 months GSC have continued to stage original theatre shows online, producing 8 live productions, seen by over 3600 households worldwide. Together with their ongoing education and outreach work, the theatre company have also created 134 jobs for freelance artists.

The company's COVID Secure protocols for these open-air performances will be announced along the full performance schedule and tickets at the end of April. Casting will be announced later in the Spring.

TICKETS

General booking 30 April | Priority Booking 28 April

DATES

She Stoops to Conquer **17 June – 03 July**
As You Like It **19 – 31 July**

BOOKING & FURTHER DETAILS

www.guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk

PRESS

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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.