



Press Release

Date: **22 November 2021** Use: **IMMEDIATE**
GSC Honorary Patron **Brian Blessed OBE**

Guildford Shakespeare Company presents 'Merry Wives – the sitcom'

Guildford Shakespeare Company is thrilled to present 'Merry Wives – the sitcom', an online adaptation of their hit 2019 production *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, re-imagined as a 1970s sitcom.

Rehearsed over zoom and filmed in isolation on mobile phones by the actors during the various lockdowns of 2020, then edited together by a team of creatives (similarly working in isolation), Shakespeare's much-loved comedy is presented across four half hour episodes. Audiences can choose to buy and watch the episodes at their leisure – in one binge session, or across several weeks. Alternatively they can join the cast and creative team, including adapter/director Caroline Devlin, director and editor Charlotte Conquest and GSC co-founder and producer Sarah Gobran, for a 'Zoom Premier' on 20 December at 7pm, whereby the audience enjoy a pre-show talk to hear more about the making of the sitcom, and then watch the first episode at the same time as other ticket holders.

GSC's 2019 feel good production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* played to sell out audiences at Stoke Park Model Railway in Guildford, described as "Pure enjoyment from beginning to end" (British Theatre Guide). Many of the original cast are reunited in the sitcom adaptation, with Guildford local Peter Gordon returning as Falstaff, Sarah Gobran reprising her role as Mrs Page, and Rosalind Blessed performing as Mistress Quickly.

Sarah Gobran said: "When Charlotte approached me about filming *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as a fundraiser whilst in lockdown, I thought she had gone mad, but Caroline and I had talked for many years about turning the play into a 4-part sitcom, and Charlotte persuaded me that it could work with everyone filming in isolation! It's been a huge labour of love. Charlotte has received over 5000 pieces of video footage from all the actors filming in their own homes and gardens. My neighbours have had to witness me running around the garden in 70s clothing performing to my phone whilst it was sellotaped to the conservatory window!

There was a brief window last August/September where one or two of us could film together, from a distance, but on the whole we filmed in isolation - some of us were even in different countries! Charlotte has painstakingly edited the footage together and the result is something really quite extraordinary."

Charlotte Conquest added: "What we've been through during the last 18 months has been unfathomable, so creating work helped keep us going even if we couldn't all be together. Our actors, who gave up so much of their time, helped us bring this ambitious project together magnificently. As all profits from tickets are being split between the actors, this is a lovely way of supporting the creative process and the arts in general. But really we hope that people have as much fun watching as we did making it! It really is the perfect 'Shakespeare with a twist' Christmas treat."

CAST

Sarah Gobran as Mistress Page
Chris Porter as George Page
Francesca Baker as Anne Page
Emma Fenney as Mistress Ford
James Burton as Frank Ford
Peter Gordon as Sir John Falstaff
Nathan Ives-Moiba as Pistol
Paula James as Host of The Railway Tavern



Press Release

Date: **22 November 2021** Use: **IMMEDIATE**
GSC Honorary Patron **Brian Blessed OBE**

Tom Richardson as Abraham Slender
Matt Pinches as Sir Hugh Evans
Alex Scott Fairley as Dr Caius
Rosalind Blessed as Mistress Quickly
Daniel Abbott as Master Fenton
Servants played by **Daniel Barzotti & Vincent Conquest**

CREATIVE TEAM

Adapted for film by **Caroline Devlin**
Directed for film by **Caroline Devlin & Charlotte Conquest**
Original Music by **Matt Eaton**
Editing & Graphic Design by **Charlotte Conquest**

To find out more visit: xxxxxx

Tickets: £20 (suggested maximum of four people per device). Tickets go on sale on Tuesday 30 November and can be bought via the website or by calling 01483 304384

Dates: Zoom Premier and live stream of first episode, Monday 20 December at 7pm (with further three episodes available to watch until 20 February)
'Watch at your leisure' tickets available to watch from Tuesday 21 December until 20 February.

Press Contact: Meg Eyre meg@guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk 07852 950 210

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.

The creative team for the original 2019 GSC stage production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* were as follows:

Adaptor & Director **Caroline Devlin**
Designer **Neil Irish**
Lighting Designer **Mark Dymock**
Sound Designer **Matt Eaton**
Fight Director **Philip d'Orléans**
Associate Designer **Anett Black**
Assistant Director **Indiana Lown Collins**
GSC Company Stage Manager **Beth Mann**
Production Manager **Chris Wilson**
Deputy Stage Manager **Elaine Yeung**
Production Assistant **Jessica Dudley**
Design Assistant **Lucy Bo**

ENDS 2/2