

# Press Release

Date: **02 December 2022** Use: **immediate**  
GSC Honorary Patron **Brian Blessed OBE**

## RICHARD II

4-25 February 2023 | Holy Trinity Church, Guildford

Guildford Shakespeare Company (GSC) open their 17<sup>th</sup> year with a politically charged production of Shakespeare's history play **RICHARD II**.

*"This blessed plot, this realm, this England."*

A narcissistic ruler. An unelected leader. A country at breaking point.

Richard rules by Divine Right, answerable to no-one except God. Advised by sycophants and spin doctors, his entitled position grants him licence to ride roughshod over established laws.

Recently exiled by Richard, Henry Bolingbroke returns with a mandate to put things right; but as an unelected leader, Henry's family grievance quickly becomes a personal ambition for national salvation.

Shakespeare's **RICHARD II** is a blistering examination of what happens when leaders' self-inflated egos dictate a nation's future. Controversial even in its first performances, its seditious potential was seized upon by the Earl of Essex who ordered a performance of it to fuel his attempted coup of 1601.

Shocking in its modernity and unflinching in its portrayal of how those in power are out of touch with the people they serve, **RICHARD II** has never been more urgent.

Given its potency this production will be given a contemporary, politically astute setting by director **NATASHA RICKMAN** (*Little Women* ★★★★★ The Guardian; *The Prince* ★★★★★ WhatsOnStage).

The title role will be played by **DANIEL BURKE** (RSC; RSC West End), who recently appeared as Laertes in GSC's 2022 *Hamlet*; whilst Henry Bolingbroke will be played by **LAURA MATTHEWS** (multiple seasons with the Stephen Joseph Theatre). Joining the cast are **SALLY CHENG** (RSC; *The Play that Goes Wrong* West End), **ANNE KAVANAGH** (*The Mousetrap*, West End; *Call the Midwife*), **LUKE LATCHMAN** (RSC; *Everyone's Talking About Jamie*, West End), **EDWARD PAYNE** (Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre), and GSC Co-Founders **SARAH GOBRAN** and **MATT PINCHES**.

**SARAH GOBRAN**, Co-Founder: "Shakespeare's perceptiveness about leadership, and the forensic examination he gives to those individuals, is one of his timeless appeals. Our 2017 *Julius Caesar*, staged in the shadow of the Brexit vote/Trump election, was testament to that. When staging Shakespeare one of the questions you have to ask is 'why this play, now?'. When we read *Richard II* again in the light of the unprecedented recent political upheavals the parallels leapt off the page."

Set around cabaret-style seating, with cheeseboards available to enjoy during the performances, audiences will be encouraged to record their thoughts on writable table coverings, creating a 'living tapestry' of commentary.

GSC are also introducing a **PAY WHAT YOU CAN** ticket offer to give as many people as possible access to great theatre experiences. "Ticket prices are often a barrier to theatregoing, particularly at the moment when so many people are struggling. We believe that no one should be excluded because of their financial circumstances. Pay What You Can also offer people who can afford to pay the recommended price or more the chance to support others who can't."



Actor Daniel Burke



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## RICHARD II

**04 - 25 February 2023 November**

Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Guildford, GU1 3RR

**PRESS NIGHT TUESDAY 07 FEBRUARY 2023**

Evenings 7.30pm

Matinees 2.30pm (Wed & Sat, not 04, 08 Feb)

Running time 2hrs 30 mins (approx.) incl. interval

Relaxed Performance 15 Feb, 2.30pm

Audio Description 25 Feb, 2.30pm

Full £28.50

Concessions £25.50 (*over 65, students, Equity, Jobseekers, Reg Disabled*)

Children £16.50 (under 16)

Family tickets £80 (2 children, 2 full)

Schools £15 pupils (1 teacher free for every 10)

**10 @ £10 tickets:** 10 reduced price tickets available  
Mondays & Tuesdays for 16-25 yr olds/Universal Credit.

### PAY WHAT YOU CAN NIGHTS £6 - £35

GSC are passionate about giving as many people as possible access to great theatre experiences, and that no one should be excluded because of their financial circumstances. Pay What You Can performances also offer people who *can* afford to pay the recommended price or more the **chance to support others who can't**.

### CHEESE AND WINE

Cheeseboards only £15; with a bottle of wine £30

### BOOKING & FURTHER DETAILS

[www.guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk](http://www.guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk)

### PRESS

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#### Winter 2023 Principal Sponsors



#### SUPPORTED BY



### 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. GSC has a site-responsive approach that places audiences right at the heart of the action, immersing them in the world of the play, enabling us to demystify the legend that theatre is for an elite, educated few but is immediate and accessible to everyone.

2022 saw the company produce its 50<sup>th</sup> production. Specialising in site-responsive interpretations of Shakespeare and other classics from literature, unique venues have included Guildford Cathedral, Watts Gallery, West Horsley Place and a Flemish Spiegeltent. In 2022 Freddie Fox played the title role in *Hamlet*, receiving wide-spread national acclaim and in 2015, Brian Blessed OBE played the title role in *King Lear*.

Its Education and Outreach creates opportunities for 15,000 people young and old every year through workshops, in-house drama clubs and classes; 11,000 of these are free-to-access social inclusion programmes. GSC's mental health programme for families, has gone on to be used as a case study for Systemic Family Training at Tavistock and also the British Association of Dramatherapy.

GSC is a registered charity and one of the largest producers of home-grown theatre in the region. Their buildings are supported by Guildford Borough Council.