

WILL'S BIRTHDAY BASH: SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL

08-24 APRIL 2022: Guildford Shakespeare Company [GSC] unveil their annual programme of events celebrating the birthday of William Shakespeare, 23 April.

As well as being **St George's Day**, 23 April is widely recognised as the day on which William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564. Since 2011, Guildford's award-winning Shakespeare company have been marking the occasion with a series of sell-out special events, including their popular Sonnet Walk Weekend.

SONNET WALK WEEKEND (23 & 24 April): Over the weekend, 30 hour-long performances will see groups of walkers following an especially designed self-guided route. Along the way they'll encounter actors in everyday settings poised to share a sonnet or speech... but where are they, and who's an actor and who's not?! Having previously taken over the streets, gardens, river paths, pubs, even rooftops of Guildford, and in 2018 the whole of West Horsley Place, the team are keeping this year's route a tightly kept secret for now.

"Shakespeare is our national poet and as such it's important that we can all celebrate his birthday, and it not just be the preserve of London or Stratford," explains Co-Founder **MATT PINCHES**. *"I love curating the Sonnet Walk Weekend as it enables audiences to experience the beauty, fun and soulfulness of Shakespeare's timeless words in a brand-new way. The added enjoyment of these walks is the unexpected route and locations we use, and the way we interpret them alongside Shakespeare. There's always a surprise or three!"*

GSC YOUNG COMPANY (8 & 9 April): GSC's flagship youth theatre company return with a new play inspired by the themes and stories of *Henry V*, *As You Like It*, *She Stoops To Conquer* and *A Christmas Carol*. Devised and performed by GSC's group of 13– 18-year-old aspiring actors and entitled *Turning the Tide*, in place of Christmas ghosts the Seven Deadly sins promise a new adventure full of camaraderie, laughter and the power of love.

TROILUS & CRESSIDA (20 April): The annual staged reading of a lesser seen Shakespeare play is directed by **NATASHA RICKMAN** (*A Christmas Carol* online 2021). This passionate story of love and betrayal features some of the most famous characters from ancient history – Achilles, Helen of Troy, Ajax – Shakespeare's 1603 play is a brilliant combination of Homer's *The Illiad* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.

MATT PINCHES: *"This mini-festival is a real community celebration and encourages people to engage with Shakespeare in a bite-size, fun and affordable way. The reading is a great way to discover a lesser-known gem, whilst the Young Company is a wonderful opportunity for our young actors of tomorrow to publicly flex their talents."*

VENUES

Sonnet Walk Weekend location to be announced

GSC Young Company is at Guildford Baptist Church

Troilus & Cressida is at St Mary's Church, Guildford

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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 immersive shows in unique venues including Guildford Cathedral, Watts Gallery, West Horsley Place and an antique Flemish Spiegelteint. In 2015, Brian Blessed OBE played the title role in *King Lear*. During the last 13 years the company has expanded its Education and Outreach, now working with over 5000 people young and old every year through classes and in-school workshops. It also creates and delivers free-to-access social inclusion programmes across Surrey for some of the most disadvantaged parts of the community. GSC is one of the largest producers of home-grown theatre in the region.



Press Release

Date: **04 March 2022** Use: **immediate**
GSC Honorary Patron **Brian Blessed OBE**

BOOKING INFO

Priority Booking **08 March** | General Booking **15 March**

Tickets

YOUNG COMPANY	£10
TROILUS & CRESSIDA	£16
SONNET WALKS WEEKEND	£17.50

No concessions | No booking fees

<https://www.guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk/wills-birthday-bash/>

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GSC PRESS CONTACT

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ENDS 1/1

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