

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: *Tom Dixon*

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Subject: **The HandleBards to tour socially-distanced outdoor Shakespeare this summer!**

Date: **20 July 2020**

***The HandleBards* will tour with *Romeo and Juliet* and a new children's show, *Gnora the Gnome's Daytime Disco*, to outdoor venues across the UK from August to September, ensuring audience safety by grouping households together and limiting the capacity of each show.**

The HandleBards are a unique theatre company who cycle Shakespeare's plays to outdoor venues across the UK, carrying all of their set props and costumes on the back of their bikes.

As with most touring theatre companies, *The HandleBards* had to cancel their summer season due to the pandemic. During lockdown they put their skills to good use, offering a free groceries delivery service on their bikes for those shielding across South London and free online educational Shakespeare workshops for young people across the world. Alongside these activities they also ran a successful fundraising campaign, securing enough funding to make sure their 2020 summer season will now go ahead in 2021.

With lockdown measures gently easing and three members of the company living in a single household, they've decided to jump straight back to it this summer, repurposing old costumes and props and rehearsing a three-hander version of *Romeo and Juliet* and a new children's show in their living room.

Co-Artistic Directors Paul Moss and Tom Dixon said: "We're excited to get on the road and offer the UK some much needed entertainment. Whilst these shows aren't our usual 4-hander cycle-powered offer, they will be as irreverent, charming and family-friendly as always. We're particularly excited to showcase our first ever children's show for under 10s, *Gnora the Gnome's Daytime Disco*, which we co-produced with *Green Submarine Theatre*. It promises to offer classic disco tunes and gentle fun to help ease your little ones out of lockdown."

"Audience safety and enjoyment are our absolute priorities this summer, which is why we've drawn up careful COVID-19 safety guidelines, limiting audience capacity and clustering households or social bubbles. Sadly this does mean our trademark picnic stealing antics will not take place in this production."

"We're obviously gutted that we will be unable to travel by bike for this short tour, however we are working with the live-event offsetting organisation *Ecolibrium* to balance our unavoidable emissions with investment in clean renewable energy and certified tree planting schemes."

ENDS

EDITORS' NOTES

For full tour schedules, please visit www.handlebards.com

ROMEO AND JULIET by William Shakespeare

Dates: 31st July – 24 September 2020

Director: Nel Crouch

Cast: Tom Dixon, Lucy Green, Paul Moss

Running Time: 1 hour 30 minutes (no interval)

Nel is Artistic Director of the award-winning company *Bucket Club*, who are produced by *Farnham Maltings*. She has been a BBC Performing Arts Fellow, Director in Residence at *Tobacco Factory Theatres*, a Resident Director at the *Almeida* and, most recently, an Assistant Director at the *Royal Shakespeare Company*.

GNORA THE GNOME'S DAYTIME DISCO by Mark Collier, Tom Dixon, Lucy Green & Paul Moss

Dates: August – September 2020

Director: Mark Collier

Cast: Tom Dixon, Lucy Green, Paul Moss

Running Time: 55 minutes (no interval)

Mark is a freelance director, writer and actor. He is associate director of *Box Tale Soup Theatre Company* whose productions have toured both nationally and internationally and include *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Little Grimm Tales*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Manalive!*, *Gone* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

ABOUT GREEN SUBMARINE THEATRE

Green Submarine Theatre creates children's theatre with a conscience, focussing on positive messages around nature, planetary issues and climate justice. They are currently in R&D with an adaptation of *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea* made entirely from repurposed plastic waste which will be touring to theatre in January 2021.

Twitter: @green_submarine | Facebook: /greensubmarinetheatre | Instagram: @greensubmarinetheatre

ABOUT THE HANDLEBARDS

The HandleBards are cycling actors who carry all the necessary set, props and costume to perform extremely energetic, charmingly chaotic and environmentally sustainable Shakespeare plays across the globe. The HandleBards are the first and only theatre company to have performed *Macbeth* in its imagined location, on the top of Dunsinane Hill. Previous tours have included performances in Zimbabwe, Sudan, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, India and the USA.

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