

British
Shakespeare
Company

present

14th Leeds Shakespeare Festival

**A
MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S
DREAM**

**MUCH
ADO
ABOUT
NOTHING**

*A magical open-air festival of love, laughter and amorous adventure,
performed by a company that continues to delight audiences and critics alike.*

starring



Mark Arden
as Peter Quince
and Dogberry



Steven Blakeley
as Puck
and Benedick



Daniela Lavender
as Titania



Louise Lytton
as Cobweb
and Hero



Gabriel Thomson
as Lysander
and Claudio



Robert J Williamson
as Bottom
and Friar

Kirkstall Abbey Coisters, Kirkstall Abbey, Leeds
Tuesday 28th July to Saturday 15th August 2009

A Midsummer Night's Dream: Tues 28, Weds 29 July; Sat 1 (matinee and evening),
Sun 2 (matinee and evening), Weds 5, Thurs 6, Sun 9, Tues 11, Weds 12, Sat 15 (matinee and evening) August

Much Ado About Nothing: Thurs 30; Fri 31, Tues 4, Fri 7, Sat 8 (matinee and evening), Thurs 13, Fri 14 August

Tickets available from: Leeds Grand Theatre, 46 New Briggate, Leeds LS1 6NZ Tel: 0844 848 2701
Leeds Visitor Centre, City Station, PO Box 244, Leeds LS1 1PL Tel: 0113 242 5242

Times: Doors and bar open 6.30pm; performances start 7.30pm; matinees start 3pm;
running time is 2 hours plus a 15 minute interval

Ticket price: in advance: Sunday to Thursday £22 / £18 / £15; Friday and Saturday £25 / £21 / £18;
Saturday matinees £15; on the door: £3 extra; concessions: £3 off; no concessions on Saturdays

British Shakespeare Company

An idyllic summer evening is guaranteed

The Guardian

Sheer delight, never has Shakespeare been so entertaining

★★★★★ **THE BBC**

British Shakespeare Company is the UK's best known and most successful open-air Shakespeare company; as a performer of Shakespeare's works, it is second in size and reputation only to the Royal Shakespeare Company.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is Shakespeare's most celebrated magical comic tale of young lovers who are at the mercy of a forest full of mystical fairies, and the tangled web of deceit that weaves around them all. Performed in beautiful Elizabethan costumes by a cast of Britain's finest professional Shakespearian actors - plus this year's special guests **Daniela Lavender**, **Mark Arden**, **Gabriel Thomson** and **Steven Blakeley** - the shows include live music and hilarious comedy all set in the stunning natural surroundings that Shakespeare intended for his plays.

Notes to editors:

Daniela Lavender is an international actress from Brazil who studied drama in both Rio and London; this is her second performance with the BSC and revisits her roles of Hippolyta and Titania in **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. Daniela's other theatre work includes Elmire in **Tartuffe** and Joan in **Sexual Perversity in Chicago**. TV includes **EastEnders**, **Casualty** and **Manchild**, and her film credits include **Longitude**, **Ali G In Da House** and **Emotional Backgammon** - for which she won best acting award at Denver World Film Festival.

Mark Arden first found fame in the alternative comedy boom of the late 1970s. He has appeared in legendary comedies such as **Blackadder**, **The Comedy Strip Presents**, **The Young Ones**, and **Carry on Columbus**. No stranger to the Bard, Mark appeared in **Romeo and Juliet**, part of the BBC's complete works series. On stage his Shakespeare credits include Capulet in **Romeo and Juliet** at the New Vic and Guildenstern in **Hamlet** at the Haymarket.

Gabriel Thomson is best known for his ten year continuing role as Michael Harper in the BAFTA-winning sitcom **My Family**.

Steven Blakeley, best known for his role as PC Geoff Younger in the hit ITV drama **Heartbeat**, is not new to professional Shakespeare having played in both **Much Ado** and **Dream** before at the Derby Playhouse.

Louisa Lytton played Ruby in **EastEnders** and quickly became one of the most popular characters in the series. After leaving **EastEnders** Louisa was asked to appear in **Strictly Come Dancing**, before getting the role of P.C Beth Green in **The Bill**. Last year she took a break from her role in **The Bill** to repeat her success from **Strictly Come Dancing** and then went onto compete for Great Britain in the **Eurovision Dance Contest**.

Louisa has also appeared in the films **Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets** and **Ali G Indahouse** and recently starred in the film **Book of Love** which she filmed for 2 months in Canada. Last year Louisa made her pantomime debut in **Peter Pan**, playing the iconic title role opposite Henry Winkler at Milton Keynes.

British Shakespeare Company

If you think Shakespeare is unintelligible or dull you have not seen this
Modern Theatre Review

Europe's leading exponent of open-air theatre...
A spellbinding and rewarding night out...better than the RSC...simply a triumph.
★★★★★ **Yorkshire Evening Post**

BSC and OPEN AIR THEATRE

For over a thousand years companies have created theatres in the centre of towns, erecting a pageant wagon or scaffolding stage, and performing great historical and classical drama for a mass audience. Shakespeare himself, whilst growing up in Stratford-upon-Avon, would have witnessed such companies performing in the heart of his home town. Wishing to continue this exciting and accessible tradition, actor-manager, **Robert J Williamson** founded British Shakespeare Company 16 years ago, and has achieved consistent critical acclaim for its productions ever since. Robert trained as an actor at RADA and he has dedicated his life to the production, direction and performance of Shakespeare's work covering the tragedies, comedies and histories, and founding National Shakespeare Day. Robert has directed and performed in around 30 Shakespearian productions, and is one of the few actor-managers in history to have taken a self-directed **Hamlet** into London's West End. A drama-documentary feature film, **Sweet Swan of Avon**, in which Robert both directs and acts, will receive an international cinema release this year. He is now dedicating much of his time to the construction of a replica of Shakespeare's Rose Theatre in the North of England.

KIRKSTALL ABBEY

Kirkstall Abbey Cloisters provide an idyllic setting for two of Shakespeare's most popular plays ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** and ***Much Ado About Nothing***.

Covered seating. Picnics welcome. Disabled access and toilets. Doors and licensed bar open 1 hour before performance. NOTE: Our licence and insurance does not allow outside alcohol to be brought on site. Book early as many performances will sell out.

For further information see www.britishshakespeare.com.

Mark Arden, Steven Blakeley, Daniela Lavender, Louisa Lytton, Gabriel Thomson and Robert J Williamson are available for interview. Pics and review tickets are available on request.

PRESS QUALITY PICTURES CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT:
www.britishshakespeare.com click 'PRESS'

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