

creative cow
in association with Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud theatre
present

William Shakespeare's
fat Falstaff in
**The Merry Wives
of Windsor**

"gloriously flamboyant"
The Stage

"impeccable comic timing...
well worth seeing"
Whats on Stage



The Merry Wives of Windsor

National Tour
Autumn 2013

Marketing Pack

Prepared by
Jordan Productions



PRODUCTION TEAM CONTACTS

PRODUCERS

Creative Cow p: 07843 092783 info@creativecow.co.uk

MARKETING

Jordan Productions Ltd p: 01323 417745 tim@jordanproductionsltd.co.uk

PRESS

RM Communications p: 02380 732981 miranda@rmcomms.co.uk

CREATIVE TEAM

Written by	William Shakespeare
Director	Amanda Knott
Lighting by	Douglas Morgan
Costumes by	Angela Taylor Master Tailor
Stage Manager	Chris Hill

CAST

Sir John Falstaff	Jack Hulland
Fenton, a gentleman	Sean Aydon
Slender	Jack Wharrier
Ford	Jack Wharrier
Page	Jonathan Parish
Doctor Caius	Jack Wharrier
Host of the Garter Inn	Jack Wharrier
Pistol,	Jonathan Parish
Nym	Sean Aydon
Robin	Sean Aydon
Simple	Sean Aydon
Mistress Ford	Maia Gibbons
Mistress Page	Katherine Senior
Anne Page	Maia Gibbons
Mistress Quickly	Katherine Senior

About Creative Cow

Creative Cow is a professional touring theatre company founded in 2007 by three professional theatre practitioners: two professional actors and a skilled artistic director. The company is called Creative Cow because it was conceived on a cattle farm in Devon where productions are managed and rehearsed before touring.

Katherine Senior, Jonathan Parish and Amanda Knott founded the Creative Cow theatre company in 2007.

Amanda Knott trained with the Royal Ballet School and went on to dance with Rambert Dance company for 10 years. She later joined the RSC as an assistant director and then became staff producer at Kent Opera before becoming the associate director at Theatre Royal, Plymouth directing many plays, musicals and operas.

What the critics have said about Creative Cow productions

"Best thing on the fringe this year...it's fiendishly funny. But none of this would work without the cast's outstanding performances...it belongs on a big stage in the West End." **The Stage**

stylish, smart, farce-like fun & very cheering." **Donald Hutera (freelance writer for The Times, etc)**

"outstanding ensemble in a flawless production" **UK theatre network**

"Laughs come thick and fast as Sheridan's play is given a sublime makeover....Our attention never strays from the mesmerising cast" **London 24**

"This is a focused, subtle, resourceful and coherent production that shows intelligence and integrity throughout. One of the pleasures of writing a regional column for many years is to see your hunches confirmed as innovative young companies like Creative Cow begin to flourish." **Plays International Magazine**

"Gloriously flamboyant...A joyous production..." **The Stage**

"Small touring troupes like Creative Cow form a backbone to the British theatre industry." **247 Magazine**

PRESS

PLEASE SEE PRESS PACK

NEWS RELEASE

A merry night with Shakespeare's best loved comic character

- *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, [VENUE, TOWN, DATE/S]

One of Shakespeare's best loved comic characters, Sir John Falstaff, is once again set to seduce audiences around the country in a glorious production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Touring venues around the UK, the play comes to [VENUE, TOWN] on/from [DATE/S]. The play is presented by Creative Cow, in association with Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre.

It is said that when Queen Elizabeth I saw Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*, she laughed so much at the character of Sir John Falstaff she ordered his continued existence at her court! The result was *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a play that provides audiences with generous helpings of wit, broad farce, trickery and true love. Less often performed than some of Shakespeare's comedies, the current tour provides a welcome opportunity to see this fast-paced and consummately skilled production by fresh young theatre company, Creative Cow.

The plot is built around the puffed up and degenerate Sir John Falstaff, a Knight of the Garter, who is seized with the outrageous idea that to seduce two of Windsor's wealthy merry wives will prove his virility and give him access to their money.

The assignations are made, but with female cunning and a devilish plot involving their husbands, Falstaff is repeatedly tricked by the women. He is hidden in a laundry basket full of dirty washing and thrown into the Thames. He is further duped and terrified in the eerie moonlit shadows of a blasted oak in Windsor Great Park to which he is lured by a band of ruthless townsfolk seeking to revel in the old man's misery. Meanwhile, the beautiful daughter of one of the 'merry wives' must employ her own brand of trickery to attain true love.

Says actor and founder member of Creative Cow Theatre Company, Katherine Senior, "When we toured another great farce, 'Charley's Aunt', earlier in the year, it became clear how much our audiences [in TOWN] enjoyed re-visiting a great and – perhaps sadly – less often performed comedy. So this is another helping. We hope our audiences will have even

more fun being entertained by it than we've had rehearsing and producing it."

This "most excellent and conceited comedie ..intermixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humours" - *The Merry Wives of Windsor* - can be seen at [VENUE, TOWN on/between DATE/S]. For tickets and more information, contact the box office [WEB ADDRESS / PHONE NUMBER]

ENDS

For further press information, images and interviews, contact:

Miranda Johnson, 01962 890208 mirandajohnson@btinternet.com or Rachel Shimell, 02380 732981 rachel.shimell@ntlworld.com

Notes to Editors:

Creative Cow is a professional touring theatre company founded in 2007 by three professional theatre practitioners: two professional actors and a skilled artistic director. The company is called **Creative Cow** because it was conceived on a cattle farm in Devon where productions are managed and rehearsed before touring.

The Cast:

Jack Hlland
Sean Aydon
Katherine Senior
Jonathan Parish
Jack Wharrier
Maia Gibbons
More Biographies to follow shortly

Katherine Senior, Jonathan Parish and **Amanda Knott** founded the Creative Cow theatre company in 2007.

Amanda Knott trained with the Royal Ballet School and went on to dance with Rambert Dance company for 10 years. She later joined the RSC as an assistant director and then became staff producer at Kent Opera before becoming the associate director at Theatre Royal, Plymouth directing many plays, musicals and operas. She is a freelance director and directed this production of 'Charley's Aunt'.

Interviews

All members of the cast and creative team are, subject to their schedules, available for media interviews. We will work with you to research story angles, whether they be links to your city, a passion for Shakespeare, comedy, costume etc, and to set up interview with cast members.

Photo Opportunities

Members of the company may be available for a photo opportunity, at a time to be agreed with you, on the first day of the run at your venue.

Competitions

Competitions can be a useful way to secure additional press coverage. Please note that the number of tickets should be kept to a minimum and should be restricted to performances early in the week. Wherever possible please ensure that the poster image is included as part of the competition.

EPK There is no show footage available although we hope to have a trailer of some sort in due course

TOUR LIST

September

Fri 13- Sat 14	Previews Tiverton Community Theatre
Weds 18 - Thurs 19	Fairfield Halls, Croydon
Fri 20- Sat 21	Pomegranate Theatre, Chesterfield
Tues 24 - Fri 27	Fisherton Mill, Salisbury
Sun 29	Ashley Wood Farm , Tisbury

October/November

Weds 2	The Key Theatre, Peterborough
Fri 4- Sat 5	Town Hall, Dulverton
Tues 15	Rosemary Branch Theatre, Islington
Thurs 17 -Sat 19	Yvonne Arnaud Theatre Guildford
Thurs 24 - Sat 26	Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne
Tues 29	Buxton Opera House
Thurs 31 October- Sat 2 Nov	New Theatre, Exeter
Sun 3 November	The Regal Theatre, Minehead

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

A short synopsis of The Merry Wives of Windsor

There is a main plot in which Sir John Falstaff conspires to seduce Mrs Page and Mrs Ford, the wives of two prominent Windsor Citizens. The women play along with him in order to expose him as a preposterous lecher. Then, to complicate matters, the insanely jealous Mr Ford disguises himself as one 'Mr Brook' and hires Falstaff to procure Mrs Ford for him in order to (so he plans) reveal her suspected infidelity. But Mrs Ford and Mrs Page dupe both Falstaff and Mr Ford.

On one occasion, Falstaff is tricked into hiding in a basket of dirty clothes, then dropped into the river ("I have a kind of alacrity in sinking," he says); on another occasion, he must disguise himself as a fat old woman, a "witch" much hated by Mr Ford who summarily pummels 'her'/him. Finally, both husbands join their 'merry wives' in an elaborate masque-like entertainment, the high point of which is the humiliation of Falstaff, who has, this time, disguised himself as the ghostly 'Herne the Hunter' complete with a massive set of horns on his head.

The secondary plot concerns the comical antics of a pair of would-be suitors for the hand of the lovely Anne Page. Doctor Caius, a quick-tempered French doctor, and Slender, the stupid nephew of Justice Shallow, vie for Anne's favour while she finds both of them abhorrent.

Sir Hugh Evans, a friend to Shallow and a supporter of Slender's cause, comes into conflict with Doctor Caius and because the Welshman Evans and the Frenchman Caius persistently garble the English language, their meetings and arguments give special pleasure to all present.

In the end, Anne Page marries her true love, a poor young gentleman named Fenton. Mr Ford promises to desist from being jealous of his wife, Falstaff is made a laughing stock and then is reconciled to the group.

HOW MANY ARE IN THE CAST?

6

WHO is The Merry Wives of Windsor suitable for?

The play is suitable for all audience members

HOW LONG IS THE SHOW?

2 hours and 20 minutes approx. (TBC) to include interval

IS THERE ANY BAD LANGUAGE / NUDITY / VIOLENCE?

no

TARGET AUDIENCES

Shakespeare lovers

Shakespeare remains one of the world's best loved playwrights and has legions of loyal fans. Target any previous productions of his works at your venues. Shakespeare buffs in particular who may belong to a specialist local society (or regional branch of The Shakespeare Society/British Shakespeare Association) will be particularly interested in the Merry Wives of Windsor as it is one of the less well-known/performed plays and features interesting quirks such as the reappearance of Falstaff, who also appears in Henry 1V Part 1 (see Selling Points).

Previous Creative Cow Audiences

Creative Cow is quickly establishing itself as a great producer of touring theatre and we have noticed a steady following in venues that we have revisited. It is essential that previous Creative Cow audiences are mailed directly to maximise this good will from patrons.

Quality & Period Drama market, Comedy and Farce

Use your own database as a starting point and select shows where the audience profiles may have been similar. Select the star-led drama and quality productions first. The show will have a broad appeal to many audience demographics but we are willing to work with you to extract the best data from your lists for mailing and e-shots.

Older Market, Historical and Costume Societies

Group Organisers need as much lead time as possible to facilitate a large booking. Write to them now targeting bridge and historical societies, bowls clubs; over 50s fitness clubs; retired social clubs and societies, U3A courses; WI; Inner Wheel Groups; Rotary Clubs; Townswomen Guilds and incentivise them with a special Book Early offer.

Teachers and Students

Although The Merry Wives of Windsor is not a study text, it is a great introduction to the works of Shakespeare given its funny and frothy characteristics. It also provides a valuable insight into the Elizabethan era, a time of odd laws and brutal existences. If applicable to your venue, target college and university Shakespeare Societies. **Creative Cow can offer educational workshops to accompany the production. Contact Katherine Senior on 07837 912284**

Voluntary Sector

A vast majority of people engage themselves with some voluntary work following retirement. Look at large organisations around your catchment such as League of Friends in the local hospital, the church community, National Trust or heritage properties. Ensure print is racked in the local church halls which have an enormous footfall through each week.

Women's Groups

A key theme in the play is strong women 'getting one over on men' and female empowerment. It appeals to groups of women – the most upmarket hen-night ever? Reading groups and book clubs may also be worth contacting

SELLING POINTS

- Creative Cow's burgeoning reputation
- Excellent reviews for previous productions
- Feel-good comedy
- Interesting quirks such as the reappearance of Falstaff. Theatre legend has it that Queen Elizabeth I saw Henry 1V Part 1 and so liked the character of Falstaff that she asked Shakespeare to write another play about him, allegedly allotting him only 14 days to do so!
- The Merry Wives of Windsor is unusual in that Shakespeare wrote most of it in prose instead of verse or poetry
- Modern themes such as infidelity, female empowerment, social status
- Will appeal to Shakespeare fans and newcomers alike
- Top quality production

DM letter copy (generic)

Dear Theatregoer,

You're guaranteed a feast of frolicsome fun with some very colourful characters this autumn when Shakespeare's feel-good comedy, **The Merry Wives of Windsor** visits XXXXXXXX.



Less often performed than some of Shakespeare's comedies, the tour gives you the chance to see this fast-paced and consummately skilled production by fresh young theatre company, Creative Cow.

The plot is built around the puffed up and degenerate Sir John Falstaff, one of Shakespeare's most famous fools who is seized with the outrageous idea that to seduce two of Windsor's wealthy merry wives will prove his virility and give him access to their money.

Falstaff finds himself tricked, humiliated and dropped into a river whilst hiding in a basket full of dirty washing in this tale of infidelity, jealousy, deception and gold-digging philandering.

"stylish, smart, farce-like fun and very cheering" Donald Hutera Freelance writer for The Times

Much like Queen Elizabeth I who reigned over Shakespeare's England, the women are in charge here and although the men end up the laughing stocks, there's a happy ending destined to warm up many an autumn evening.

"Outstanding ensemble in a flawless production" UK Theatre Network

Whether you're a Bard buff or beginner, this production has something for everyone - generous helpings of wit, broad farce, trickery and true love.

The Merry Wives of Windsor is at XXXXX from XXX until XXX. Tickets priced XXX - XXX are available from the box office on XXXX XXXXXX or online at www.XXXXXX

Best wishes,

XXXX XXXX
XXXX XXXX
XXXX XXXX

PROMOTIONS

All offers and discounts should be agreed with Jordan Productions or RM Communications before they are made available.

Offers on the show should be directed to press night and/or early in the run to ensure good word of mouth.

As well as newspaper promotions, we can suggest the following promotions in your area to boost sales:

- Competitions and reader offers can be arranged with the press and is good to help maximise exposure. Free tickets can be provided for this but 'meet the cast' and backstage tours can be great prizes also.

ADVERTISING

Advertising should appear in all programmes of other suitable shows at the venue.

The show should be carried in venue listings as early as possible.

Jordan Productions requests approval on all advertising prior to placement and is willing to consider additional ad spend subject to contract.

INTERNET

The show should be advertised on as many websites as possible. Please create links from your venue's website to www.jordanproductionsltd.co.uk and www.creativecow.co.uk

Email databases should be used for mailings as early as possible and also for last minute targeted offers.

PRINT

Print should be distributed throughout the region with a noticeable presence in the town/city centre.

Print should be displayed within the theatre as early as possible.

Print distribution should include, but not be limited to: cinemas, retail outlets, taxi stands and firms, shopping centres, libraries, bookshops, bus stations, train stations, schools, colleges and universities, social clubs, shops, offices, cafes, bars, pubs, clubs, music venues, restaurants, arts centres, beauty salons (including hairdressers), service stations, evening class venues, leisure centres, sports clubs and gyms, local amateur dramatics groups.

Leaflets can also be used in many other ways including targeted door-to-door distribution, exit flyering at relevant shows, inclusion in ticket envelopes, insertion in newspapers etc.

FRONT OF HOUSE

Print should be displayed Front of House as soon as possible.

You will receive quote posters to put up Front of House

If you require any banners or larger production photos then please contact Jordan Productions Ltd to see what is available.