



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subject: Cycling Shakespeare troupe The HandleBards back on tour with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*

The world's first cycling theatre company, **The HandleBards**, are delighted to celebrate their 5th anniversary with the return of their hit all-male production of Shakespeare's ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** from June to September. Also, launching in June, the all-female troupe will tour a new production of ***As You Like It*** from London to Edinburgh and across the South Coast. The two troupes will perform over 60 shows each of their unique brand of environmentally sustainable and bicycle-powered Shakespeare across the UK, including performances at **Bestival**.

Touring with four actors sharing multiple roles and directed by **James Farrell**, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be performed by the all-male troupe, journeying across the UK from locations in London to Edinburgh. James is an Associate Practitioner at the RSC and regular HandleBards director. Other directing credits include *Pericles* (RSC), *Animal Farm*, *Twelfth Night* (Royal & Derngate), and *Mucky Kid* (Theatre503).

Directed by **Nel Crouch**, the four-strong female troupe will tour *As You Like It* on bicycle 1,500 miles from London to Edinburgh and then cycle performing the show from Devon to London. Nel's directing credits include a production of *Fossils* as part of New York's Brits Off Broadway season, *The Beasts* (Lyric Hammersmith), *The Love I Feel is Red* (Tobacco Factory) and *Launch Party* (Farnham Maltings). Nel assistant-directed *The Trial* (Young Vic) and is artistic director of Bucket Club, a multi-award-winning associate company at Farnham Maltings.

To date, The HandleBards have **pedalled 6,000 miles** and performed to over 50,000 people, across 12 countries and 3 continents. The company engage local communities at their shows, partnering with local business and inviting local musicians to play. This year, they are partnering with **British bicycle manufacturer Pashley**, whose hand-crafted bikes the troupes will be riding throughout 2017.

In 2014, the company was **Winner of the Edinburgh Fringe Sustainable Practice Award** from Creative Carbon Scotland, which assessed sustainable design, communication of sustainable message and a high-quality production. They were nominated again in 2015 and in 2016 were commended for 'consistency in sustainability excellence' and **nominated for The Stage's inaugural Sustainability Award**.

Producer Paul Moss, said: "Climate change is real and we're running out of time to mitigate the damage we're doing to our planet. We're committed to showing people how everyone can play their part, however small. In our fifth year as a bicycle-powered, environmentally sustainable touring troupe, we'll continue pedalling to become the world's front-runners in sustainable theatre."

ENDS

EDITORS' NOTES

For full tour schedules, please visit

A Midsummer Night's Dream - <http://www.handlebards.com/boys-tour-dates>

As You Like It - <http://www.handlebards.com/girls-tour-dates>

***A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare**

June – September 2017

Director: James Farrell

Designer: Nik Corrall

Composer: Guy Hughes

Troupe: Callum Brodie, Tom Dixon, Calum Hughes McIntosh, Matt Seager

Running time: 2 hours (incl interval)

The return tour of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will travel by van. To offset the carbon footprint of the tour and to ensure the company continues its commitment to environmentally friendly touring, trees will be planted in several locations over the winter months (planting season is November to March).

***As You Like It* by William Shakespeare**

June – September 2017

Director: Nel Crouch

Designer: Alberta Jones

Troupe: Eleanor Dillon-Reams, Jessica Hern, Lucy Green, Lotte Tickner

Running time: 2 hours (incl interval)

About The HandleBards

The HandleBards is made up of two troupes (one all-male, one all-female) of 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. In 2016, the all-female troupe became the first ever all-female theatre troupe to perform in Sudan.

Previous international tours have included performances in Zimbabwe, Sudan, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore and India.

Twitter: @HandleBards / Facebook: HandleBards / Instagram: @HandleBards

For more information and images please contact Emma Draper or Claudia Conway at Draper Conway on +44 (0) 7910 837008 / +44 (0) 7966 567701 or email emma@draperconway.com / claudia@draperconway.com