

For Immediate Release
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**Optimist Theatre Announces Next Production: “No Holds Bard: The Pericles Project”
Web series to feature filmed episodes of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* beginning Jan. 13, 2021**

MILWAUKEE, WIS. – Optimist Theatre, best known for its productions of Milwaukee’s free Shakespeare in the Park (SITP) since 2010, is preparing to release “No Holds Bard: The Pericles Project.”

Debuting on Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021, at 7:30 p.m., two episodes will be streamed for free every other week on NoHoldsBard.org and the No Holds Bard YouTube and social media channels.

One of Shakespeare’s less-often produced works, the play follows the adventures of Pericles as he tries to avoid assassination by an evil king, falls in love, loses his love, regains his love, and suffers a series of high seas storms and shipwrecks in the process. A romance with elements of farce, or a farce with elements of romance, Optimist’s version of the story takes a unique approach.

Optimist dramaturg and Shakespeare in the Park co-founder ML Cogar turned William Shakespeare’s *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* into a 16-episode serial. Cutting the play into such short segments enabled small groups of cast and crew members to rehearse and film outdoors. Health and safety protocols were a vital part of the process. Depending on their roles, the cast members met anywhere from one to 20 times, at outdoor locations throughout Milwaukee County on weekends beginning in August and wrapping in December. The cast includes Milwaukee favorites Andrew Varela, John Kishline, Deborah Clifton, Libby Amato, David Flores, Kelly Doherty, Rebekah Farr and many others.

Tom Reed, Optimist’s associate artistic director and another co-founder, summed up their play choice. “Pericles is perfect for a cliff-hanger sort of serial. The adventures are outrageous and it’s quite a soap opera. Hosts will be able to bookend each broadcast with the familiar ‘Last week on Pericles, our hero...’ and ‘Tune in next time to find out if...’ ”

Each installment will be introduced by a different local host and feature a “drink of the week” — a cocktail pairing that viewers can make and enjoy at home. Extra features will include chats with the cast, creative team and special guests — and a few surprises along the way.

For more information or to sign up for email reminders, please visit www.noholdsbard.org or follow the project on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NoHoldsBardMKE

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Optimist Theatre is a 501(c)3 non-profit theater company whose roots date to 1993 and that has been producing Shakespeare in the Park since 2010. A substantial portion of Optimist Theatre’s funding comes from donations by individual community members. It is also supported by grants from the Isabel and Alfred Bader Foundation, The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Herzfeld Foundation, BMO Harris Bank, the United Performing Arts Fund, Wisconsin Arts Board, Milwaukee Arts Board and others.