

Optimist Theatre and the Milwaukee Turners Announce Collaboration on No Holds Bard Web Series

***The Pericles Project* to film live host segments at Turner Hall starting February 24**

MILWAUKEE, WIS. – Optimist Theatre, best known for its productions of Milwaukee's free Shakespeare in the Park (SITP) and the Milwaukee Turners, the state's oldest civic group and home to one of Milwaukee's premiere entertainment venues, will begin working together to safely bring new hosts and invited special guests to the live segments of No Holds Bard: The Pericles Project.

Unable to stage Shakespeare in the Park in the summer of 2020 due to the pandemic, Optimist Theatre crafted a means to put actors back to work and still deliver free Shakespeare to greater Milwaukee. Dubbed No Holds Bard, the project turned the romantic farce *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* into a 16-episode web series. The first two episodes debuted on Jan. 13 and two new episodes debut every other Wednesday on No Holds Bard's YouTube Channel and Facebook page, with previous episodes available on their website, noholdsbard.org. The episodes feature a live host segment, before, between, and after the episodes. Starting at 7:30 p.m on February 24, the live host segments will be streamed live from Turner Hall. The host is slated to be Optimist Theatre's Executive Director Susan Scot Fry.

The episodes themselves were rehearsed and filmed outdoors between August and December, following strict safety protocols. The initial plan was to stream episodes with live host segments, but a larger space was needed to safely welcome guest hosts while maintaining social distancing, and so the collaboration with the Milwaukee Turners at Turner Hall was born.

Susan Scot Fry said of the collaboration, "Teaming up with the Milwaukee Turners is a natural for Optimist Theatre. We both focus on bringing people together for a shared, elevating experience. Of course, theatre is known for catharsis and if you've ever taken advantage of Turner's climbing walls, you're going to feel cathartic too! Of particular health and safety importance, home-basing at Milwaukee Turners for No Holds Bard: The Pericles Project means we are able to bring in a variety of special guest hosts for the livestream portion of our broadcasts. Who knows? Maybe we'll even talk Emilio De Torre into being on camera."

Emilio De Torre, Executive Director of Turner Hall, added, "The Milwaukee Turners are incredibly excited to partner with No Holds Bard to see 'what pageantry, what feats, what shows' their bi-weekly broadcasts of *Pericles* may have for Milwaukeeans. The Turners have a rich history of supporting the arts and music, and many of these talented actors, directors and performers are Turners themselves. It is a treat that these performances can be offered to us all for free during this horrible pandemic. We all await the return of live entertainment and a chance to shout huzzah in unison."

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

To follow news from Turner Hall, visit www.facebook.com/milwaukeeturners or www.milwaukeeturners.org

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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.

The Milwaukee Turners, Inc. is a 501 (c)3 non-profit charitable group that operates out of Turner Hall, a national historic landmark located at 1034 N Vel R. Phillips Ave, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203. The Turners have provided opportunities for people to develop a "sound mind in a sound body" and work toward social justice since 1853.