

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12 June 2019

Shakespeare in the Park Offers “The Comedy of Errors” at Peck Pavilion in June & July

MILWAUKEE, WIS. – Milwaukee’s Free Shakespeare in the Park (SITP) celebrates their milestone 10th season with its 2019 production of “The Comedy of Errors.”

At the forefront are relatively new Milwaukee theatre actors Connor Blankenship, Thorin Ketelsen, Cole Conrad and Rebekah Farr who will star as the two pairs of separated twins in the slapstick farce co-directed by M.L. Cogar and Ron Scot Fry. SITP will mount performances on three weekends: June 27-30, July 5-7 and 11-13, with weekday matinees on July 2 and 9 and an open-to-the-public preview on June 26. Optimist Theatre, producer of SITP, is also delighted to return to the Peck Pavilion at the Marcus Performing Arts Center for a third season as part of the **LIVE @ Peck Pavilion** performance calendar.

Cogar explains, “True to its reputation, “Comedy of Errors” is a perfectly silly play. It’s also a deceptively deep dive into how we build our identities of the most essential, unchangeable parts of who we are. It’s about the things we choose to make true or to believe of ourselves and of the ways that those around us alternately understand or grossly misinterpret us. In other words, it’s surprisingly contemporary and ultimately timely. Most of all, I think we could all use a good laugh right about now, and Shakespeare gives us that gift in spades here.”

The Cast

The cast of “The Comedy of Errors” includes stage veterans Jim Pickering* (a founding company member), Robert Spencer*, and Tami Workentin* in a wide variety of roles.

Libby Amato - Luciana
Randall Anderson - Angelo the Goldsmith
Connor Blankenship - Antipholus of Ephesus
Cole Conrad - Dromio of Ephesus
Rebekah Farr - Dromio of Syracuse
Tosha Freeman - The Jailer and Ensemble
Ian Hathway - Second Merchant and Ensemble
Mary Kababik - Aemilia the Abbess
Thorin Ketelsen - Antipholus of Syracuse
Katherine Norman - Adriana
James Pickering* - Egeon and Balthazar
Nate Press - Messenger and Ensemble
Izaiah Ramirez - Officer and Ensemble
Robert Spencer* - Duke Solinus, Dr. Pinch, and Nell the Kitchen Wench
Tami Workentin* - Courtesan and First Merchant

In addition to directing, Cogar serves as SITP Dramaturg. Veronica Zahn* is the Production Stage Manager and Vocal Coaching is by Associate Artistic Director Tom Reed

*Member, Actors’ Equity Association

The Theater

The Peck Pavilion, located downtown on the corner of Kilbourn Avenue and North Water Street on the Downtown Riverwalk, is the only outdoor performance space in Milwaukee that was designed

specifically for spoken word theater. Audiences for SITP at the Peck have enthusiastically received the venue with its built-in, covered seating, and handicapped accessibility.

“The Marcus Center is thrilled to be partnering with Optimist Theater,” said Paul Mathews, Marcus Center President and CEO. “Including their performances on our free **LIVE @ Peck Pavilion** season, sponsored once again by the Molitor Charitable Trust, helps us to continue broadening our reach into the community and allows us to help Optimist make Shakespeare accessible to everyone.”

“The Comedy of Errors”

One of Shakespeare’s early plays, “The Comedy of Errors” is also the shortest. It’s filled with puns, mistaken identity and fast-paced farce. Unfolding over just 24 hours, order is overthrown when two pairs of twins, separated as infants, find their paths crossing to their own confusion and that of everyone they encounter. A series of mishaps ensue, including arrest, beating, a near-seduction and accusations of theft, madness and infidelity, until the truth at last untangles the misunderstandings.

The play has been adapted in operatic, musical and film formats, finding particular popularity in the Indian cinema, where it’s formed the basis for at least eight movies.

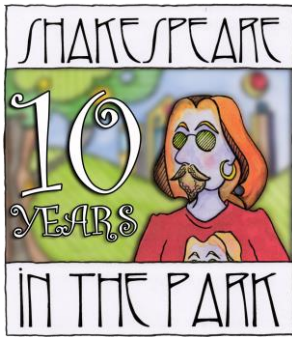
About Shakespeare in the Park

2019 is free Shakespeare in the Park’s tenth anniversary season. To date, SITP has played to a cumulative audience of more than 22,000 people, offering a professional outdoor theater experience while employing 250-plus Wisconsin actors, crew, suppliers and vendors, primarily from the greater Milwaukee area.

Shakespeare in the Park is the creation of Optimist Theatre, a 501(c)3 non-profit theater company in existence since 1993 and producing SITP since 2010. Its shows are free to attend but far from free to produce. A substantial portion of their funding comes from donations of individual community members who believe that Shakespeare in the Park is important – to Milwaukee, to the community – and a vital element of a city with a rich theater tradition. They are also supported by grants from the Isabel and Alfred Bader Foundation, the Harry & Lynde Bradley Foundation, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Herzfeld Foundation, BMO Harris Bank, the Milwaukee Arts Board, and others.

About the Marcus Performing Arts Center

Established in 1969, the Marcus Performing Arts Center is the premier performing arts community gathering space in Southeastern Wisconsin. As the Marcus Center moves into its 50th year, it continues to build bridges between diverse members of our community through high-quality arts entertainment in the region and the state. The Broadway series, sponsored by Associated Bank, is recognized as bringing the best of Broadway entertainment to Milwaukee for the past 20 years and provides opportunities to educate, entertain and engage audiences. The Marcus Center is home to the Milwaukee Symphony, Milwaukee Ballet, Florentine Opera, First Stage plus a variety of other important community and family events throughout the year. For more information about events visit the Marcus Center website at www.MarcusCenter.org. The Marcus Center is a private non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation and is a dedicated veterans memorial in Milwaukee.



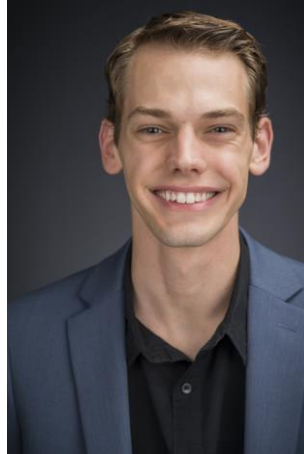
Shakespeare in the Park logo

Marcus Center for the Performing Arts logo

Live at Peck Pavilion logo



Connor Blankenship



Cole Conrad



Rebekah Farr



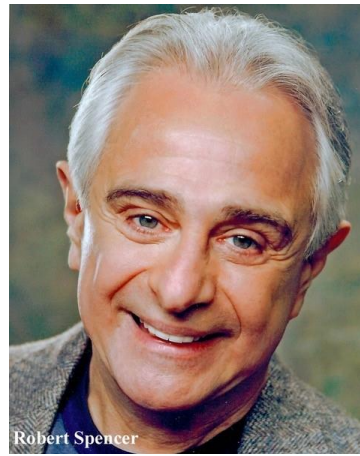
Thorin Ketelsen



James Pickering, Member, Actors' Equity Association



Tami Workentin – Member, Actors' Equity Association



Robert Spencer – Member, Actors' Equity Association

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