



## San Francisco Shakespeare Festival Announces Hybrid Four-Episode Production of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* for 2021 Summer Season

- Season to conclude with in-person performances -

For the 39<sup>th</sup> season of Free Shakespeare in the Park, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival will stage a hybrid version of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* in a new verse translation by playwright Ellen McLaughlin. The production will be presented in four episodes to be performed serially throughout the season. Episodes 1 through 3 will be broadcast live online utilizing the same Unified Virtual Space technique the company pioneered for last summer's virtual *King Lear*. Conditions permitting, the season will culminate with Episode 4 and a greatly-anticipated return to in-person park performances.

The episodic plot structure of *Pericles* lends itself to a Netflix-style performance schedule. Audiences can watch each episode live as it is performed. Each episode will also be recorded. As the summer progresses, the live performance of each new episode will prompt the release of recordings of prior episodes allowing audiences to delve into the story. This includes the final Episode 4, which will be performed in the park and recorded for remote viewing. To experience the story of *Pericles* in its entirety, audiences can opt to follow each new live performance or binge-watch parts or even all of the play by summer's end.

As always, performances are free. A performance schedule is currently in development and will be posted on the Festival's website ([www.sfshakes.org](http://www.sfshakes.org))

The Festival selected *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* to convey a message of hope as the Bay Area emerges from the grip of a deadly pandemic. The play belongs to the genre of Jacobean romance, which is characterized by fraught travel, separation, hardship, and heart-wrenching loss, all of which are softened by an uplifting conclusion marked by reunion and recuperation. This romance affirms the values home, friends, and family after arduous journeys.

The responsibility for direction is shared by four directors. Carla Pantoja, who serves as the Director of Vision ensuring artistic continuity of the entire production, directs Episodes 2 and 4. Pantoja is a long-time associate of the Festival having served as actor, director, teaching artist, resident artist and fight director. She has worked with theaters throughout the Bay Area and with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. In taking on this project Pantoja comments that "Pericles is an epic tale that holds so much of what this last year has been like. It is a journey that will forever change the traveler. When we take Pericles' journey, we transform with him as he goes from a young cavalier suitor, to a man weighed down with grief, finally emerging to rediscover the family he longed for the entire time."

The Festival's Artistic Director Rebecca J. Ennals directs Episode 1. Ennals directed the Festival's musical version of *As You Like It* (2019), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2018), *The Winter's Tale* (2016), *Romeo and Juliet* (2015), and *The Taming of the Shrew* (2014). Episode 3 is directed by Elizabeth Carter, whose 2020 virtual *King Lear* received wide acclaim. Carter is the recent recipient

of the Lloyd Richards New Futures Residency award at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The pre-show Creator/Director is Carolina Morones. To thoughtfully guide the audience through this episodic journey, Morones will create and direct interactive pre-show material summarizing the story so far and engaging audience members in a game they can play from home.

The script for this production is a modern-verse translation of Shakespeare's *Pericles* by Ellen McLaughlin in partnership with PlayOn Shakespeare. Of the play, McLaughlin says, "This is Shakespeare at his most sublime, and it was a lovely challenge to meet him in the beauty of his language and try to do right by him. Once I got inside it, I was humbled and moved by it, even beyond what I had anticipated."

PlayOn CEO and Creative Director Lue Douthitt adds, "We are so pleased that SF Shakes will be producing Ellen's beautiful translation of *Pericles* this summer. SF Shakes upholds the values of access, inclusion, and diversity in their process and practice, making them an excellent and synergetic partner for PlayOn Shakespeare to team up with."

Adds PlayOn Shakespeare board member and co-founder Dave Hitz, "I'm looking forward to experiencing Ellen's deeply profound and emotionally-stirring translation in my hometown."

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Note to Editor: artists, collaborators, and staff are available for interviews. Call (415) 558-0888 or email [sfshakes@sfshakes.org](mailto:sfshakes@sfshakes.org).

Press photo available at <http://www.sfshakes.org/media/photos/free-shakespeare-in-the-park-2021>



Directors of San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 2021 Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*.

L to R: **Elizabeth Carter**, Director of Episode 3; **Carla Pantoja**, Director of Vision and Director of Episodes 2 and 4; **Carolina Morones**, Pre-Show Director and Creator; **Rebecca J. Ennals**, Director of Episode 1

**About San Francisco Shakespeare Festival:**

The mission of the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is to make the words and themes of Shakespeare accessible to everyone regardless of age, ethnicity, financial status, or level of education.

**About PlayOn Shakespeare:**

PlayOn Shakespeare is a nonprofit company promoting and creating contemporary modern translations of Shakespeare's plays. PlayOn partners with artists and organizations across the globe to deliver these translations through different channels including publications, podcasts, theatrical productions, film, and audio books.