

Bard on the Beach Festival Announces New BMO Virtual Mainstage Project

VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA, September 4, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Bard on the Beach](#) Shakespeare Festival is pleased to announce that it has received a renewed commitment from the BMO Financial Group, one that will entertain and enlighten Canadians as well as support the ongoing survival and success of Western Canada's largest theatre festival. BMO is the Festival's long-time corporate partner and the naming sponsor of its primary theatre stage. It is now shifting into a new role as sponsor of a multi-episode digital content stream called the BMO Virtual Mainstage. The new stream offers original, artist-driven programming that includes spoken word, music and on-location performance segments, in imaginative formats and with advanced production values. Dozens of artists and theatre makers from across Canada have contributed to the project. The first episode, by Tai Amy Grauman, was launched on August 28. Over a dozen segments will be released over the next few months, with new episodes available on a weekly basis.



The virtual content project and its sponsorship by BMO comes after Bard, Western Canada's largest Shakespeare festival, cancelled its traditional 2020 Season in April; it is the first break in a 30-year-long annual run in Vancouver's Vanier Park (Sen'ákw) that has drawn a total of almost 2 million attendees since 1990. The Festival's change to a virtual focus is represented by a refashioned Bard logo, featuring the phrase BARD BEYOND THE BEACH and the tag line "Hearts remote, yet not asunder" (William Shakespeare).

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Festival Artistic Director Christopher Gaze explains: "For many years BMO has helped to nurture Bard and we have blossomed and flourished with their generous investment in our company. I

cannot say enough how grateful we are for their continued support during these difficult COVID times. Navigating the arts through these unfamiliar waters is perhaps the hardest thing any of us has ever had to do. The lead taken by BMO to support our virtual stage is absolutely wonderful. It means that while our artists can't be on our physical stages, their remarkable creativity can be seen by our existing audience, and other arts lovers across the country and beyond."

"Now, more than ever, the arts have a unique opportunity to bring us all together" said Paul Seipp, Head, Business Banking, Western Region, BMO Bank of Montreal. "We have been a proud supporter of the Bard for many years and are excited to be part of this new project – it will create an engaging experience for the community while exploring new creative avenues. We look forward to seeing these episodes come to life."

The Festival's full suite of 2020 online content ranges from livestreamed interactive gatherings that take attendees behind the scenes to discover how production elements and venue spaces are built, to a range of interactive digital resources for educators and families – plus the new online Bard Boutique, offering Festival-branded merchandise and more. All Bard's virtual content and resources can be found at bardonthebeach.org

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