



BOB JONES UNIVERSITY  
CONCERT, OPERA  
& DRAMA SERIES

*The University Classic Players*  
*in*  
*William Shakespeare's*

THE MERCHANT OF  
VENICE

Directed by William Pinkston

Scene and costume designs by Harrell Whittington

Music by Joan Pinkston

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### VENETIANS

<b>Antonio</b> , a merchant of Venice .....	Ed Panosian
<b>Bassanio</b> , friend of Antonio, suitor to Portia .....	Gary Moore
<b>Gratiano</b> , friend of Antonio and Bassanio .....	Brad Payne
<b>Lorenzo</b> , friend of Antonio, suitor to Jessica .....	Stephen Jones
<b>Salerio</b> , friend of Antonio and Bassanio .....	Edward Murphy
<b>Solanio</b> , friend of Antonio and Bassanio .....	David Eoute, Jr.
<b>The Duke of Venice</b> .....	Marius Pundys
<b>Court Clerk</b> .....	Joshua Crockett

### SHYLOCK'S HOUSEHOLD & FRIENDS

<b>Shylock</b> , a Jewish money lender .....	Bob Jones III
<b>Jessica</b> , Shylock's daughter.....	Erin Jones
<b>Launcelot Gobbo</b> , Shylock's servant.....	Todd Tilghman
<b>Tubal</b> , a friend of Shylock.....	Joshua Crockett

### PORTIA'S HOUSEHOLD & SUITORS

<b>Portia</b> , an wealthy heiress.....	Tamar Pundys
<b>Nerissa</b> , Portia's waiting maid.....	Holly Shiveley
<b>Prince of Morocco</b> , suitor to Portia.....	Willie Thompson
<b>Prince of Arragon</b> , suitor to Portia.....	Chuck Nicholas
<b>Balthasar</b> , Portia's servant.....	Daniel Arnold
<b>Pages</b> .....	Jason Martin, Matthew Peacock, Benjamin Shore

Senators, Citizens of Venice, Jailer: Ben Alier, Peggy Alier, Hugh Clarke, Ralph Clough, Kevin Collins, Geoffrey Ericson, Jonathan Evans, Rochelle Greer, Luke Holt, Peter Huber, Isaac Kelly, Michele Labar, Jeffrey Leaverton, Erin Lewis, Joanna Lynch, Barkley May, David Moore, Joshua Sasportas, Bernice Smith, William Sponseller, Trent Vernon

## PRODUCTION STAFF

<b>Production Manager</b> .....	Rodney McCarty
<b>Assistant Production Managers</b> .....	David Vierow, Sean Dooley
<b>Assistant to the Director</b> .....	Ginger Jacobson
<b>Rehearsal Assistant</b> .....	Catherine McQuaid
<b>Dramaturg</b> .....	Janie McCauley
<b>Set Decoration</b> .....	Kenn Brinson
<b>Lighting Designer</b> .....	Rich Streeter
<b>Stage Manager</b> .....	Matthew K. Jones
<b>Costume/Makeup/Hair Supervisor</b> .....	Dan Sandy
<b>Costume Construction</b> .....	Jean Sponseller, Linda Lednum
<b>Wardrobe Supervisor</b> .....	Michelle Trabue

**Hairstylist**..... Marianna Trondle  
**Audio Supervisor**..... Max Masters

### SYNOPSIS

Half of the play is set in Venice, a lively, trifling city full of gallants, masquers, and idle talkers. Bassanio needs money for a trip to Belmont to seek Portia's hand. His wealthy friend Antonio wishes to help, but his resources are all invested. To supply Bassanio, Antonio agrees to a bond with Shylock, the forfeiture of which would be a pound of Antonio's flesh. Antonio expects the return on his investments long before the due date, but is overwhelmed by improbable catastrophe; and the Jew insists on his rights.

The other half of the play is set in beautiful Belmont, a nearby estate. The lovely, intelligent Portia is committed to her father's dying will: she will marry only the suitor who chooses correctly from three chests, one each of gold, silver, and lead. As Bassanio chooses the correct chest, word arrives of Antonio's fate. Portia sends her new husband with money to pay the Jew but there is little hope, for Shylock seeks not money, but revenge.

In the courtroom Portia, disguised as a young lawyer, defeats the villainous schemes of the Jew. The grateful Bassanio offers the lawyer money, but it is refused. When pressed, the lawyer agrees to a remembrance token and asks for the ring Bassanio is wearing—the ring Portia gave him on their wedding day and from which he promised never to part.

The play is divided into thirteen scenes with an intermission\* following scene seven.

### DIRECTOR'S NOTES

In *The Merchant of Venice* several plots and sets of characters examine the hierarchy of relationships, all of which deal with love. These range from the love of money, revenge, self, or ornamentation (we would say "possessions" or "things"), to the relationships between friends, servant and master, parent and child, and even husband and wife. To use a modern term, the play deals with priorities.

In Shakespeare's time the proper bond of male friendship was viewed as the highest sort of human relationship. Antonio is willing to bend his long-standing conviction against borrowing money with interest to help Bassanio. Even Portia recognizes this relationship. Upon learning of Antonio's problem, she insists that Bassanio go to his aid even before

their marriage is consummated. As Shylock demands Antonio's life, the "noble merchant" is willing to die for having aided his friend Bassanio.

Portia knows her priorities. Although it puts her in an awkward position, she yields to her dead father's will in regard to whom she will marry. The first two suitors, their priorities fixed on self and their desires focused on ornamentation and material gain, choose wrong. When Bassanio, motivated by correct priorities, chooses the right casket, Portia properly gives herself and Belmont to her husband. Bassanio needs instruction regarding priorities. As the lawyer, Portia lectures him about bending the law and makes sure he understands the proper husband-wife relationship, as she tricks him into giving up the ring.

Shylock is the villain of this play not because of his nationality, but because his priorities are wrong: he loves money above all else. He would rather have his daughter dead if he could regain the ducats she took as she eloped. The other Jews in the play, Jessica and Tubal, do not share Shylock's miserly priorities and are not depicted in a negative light.

Shylock despises Antonio because he lends money gratis, which cuts into the usurer's profits. (Ethical writers in Shakespeare's day viewed lending for profit as evil. Antonio's practice of lending based on friendship and need, by contrast, is noble.) Just as Shylock despises Antonio for commercial reasons, Antonio despises the practices of profiting from those who are in need and condemns Shylock for being a hard-hearted loan shark.

Shylock's greed is matched only by his desire for revenge against a person who has thwarted his profits. Shylock rejoices when Antonio cannot repay his debt on time. Even when many times the original sum is offered, he rejects it. Revenge is so high in Shylock's hierarchy of values that he fully expects to legally kill Antonio.

A major theme of the play is justice versus mercy. Seeking revenge, Shylock demands his case be interpreted justly, to the letter of the law. Given repeated opportunities to show mercy, he refuses. Warned that without mercy all stand condemned by the law, Shylock retorts, "What judgment shall I fear, doing no wrong?"

When the law stops his vengeance and condemns him, it is Shylock who must beg for mercy. In response, both the court and Antonio are merciful, granting him not only his life but the resources to prevent him becoming destitute.

The court's final action, forcing Shylock to become a Christian, is

controversial to some modern audiences. Given the themes of love and justice versus mercy developed in the play, the court's action is neither surprising nor disappointing. An Elizabethan audience would have seen Shylock's conversion not as a transgression of religious freedom, but as a loving alternative to Shylock's ultimate perishing in hell. Shylock's responses lead one to believe his will be a "conversion of convenience" permitting him to keep his life and money, but of no spiritual benefit, for his heart is unchanged. Shylock is thus a villain to be pitied, not one to be scorned.

This production is set in the Venetian rococo style of the mid-seventeen hundreds. As Venice declined in power, styles became more elaborate and ornate, and manners became more artificial, as we have sought to represent in this production.

BOB JONES JR.  
1911-1997

It is our wish to dedicate this performance of *The Merchant of Venice* to the memory of Bob Jones Jr., founder of the University Classic Players.

In the fall of 1929, as a college sophomore, Bob Jones Jr. began the Classic Players and in June 1930, *The Merchant of Venice* was our first production. Eighteen-year-old Bob Jones Jr. not only designed and executed the sets and costumes, he appeared as Shylock. In the mid 1930s he studied at Stratford-upon-Avon with a Shakespeare company.

Bob Jones Jr. performed, more than twenty Shakespearean roles as well as various others with the Classic Players. Shylock, Hamlet, Romeo, Lear, Othello, and others were a part of "Curtain Calls," a one-man show which toured the country in the 1930s and 40s. Rave reviews led Warner Brothers to offer him a screen test. He refused and limited his theatrical appearances to the company he founded.

One of Bob Jones Jr.'s most memorable characters was Shylock, and it was one of his favorites. He assumed the role in one of Unusual Films' earliest releases, an illustrated sermon on justice and mercy, *A Pound of Flesh*. His final appearance as Shylock was in 1986 and is featured in the video *Shakespeare and Shylock*, which contains an interview with him discussing the character. At the time of his death Shylock was the only role that no other actor had ever performed with the Classic Players in our nearly seventy years of existence and dozens of performances of the play.

Under the guidance of Bob Jones Jr. the University Classic Players was recognized by *Shakespeare Survey* as one of the "noteworthy classic

repertoire companies” in America. He served at various times as actor, designer, producer, supervisor, scholar, critic, coach, and mentor of the company. His influence for excellence has affected every production. It is our desire and our pledge that his godly influence will continue to guide us.

## **RODEHEAVER AUDITORIUM**

**May 6, and 7, 1998, 8 P.M.**

**May 8, 1998, 2 P.M.**

Chimes will be played and lobby lights will flash three minutes before the end of intermission. After the houselights are dimmed following intermission, no one will be readmitted to his seat.

Cameras and recording equipment are not permitted in the Auditorium during any performance. We request that signal watches be turned off during the program.

Tickets for this production have been sponsored by Genesis Marketing.