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BROADWAY EXTRAS

MERCHANT OF VENICE to Play Actors' NET, 5/31-6/16

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Tuesday, May 14, 2013; 07:05 PM - by [BWW News Desk](#)



William Shakespeare's masterwork The Merchant of Venice - one of the Bard's most popular yet trickiest plays - will be interpreted and illuminated May 31 - June 16 on the intimate Heritage Center stage.

The Merchant of Venice is categorized as a Shakespearean comedy. But how many laughs can be found when a money-lender seeks "a pound of flesh" from a man helping his friend find love?

"All the elements of a Shakespearean comedy are there: a trio of love conflicts, a seemingly

Impossible barrier to that love being fulfilled and a woman disguising herself as a man," explained NET Artistic Director Cheryl Doyle, who directs the show. "But, Shakespeare wrote such a complex character in Shylock, who demands a pound of flesh in to satisfy an unpaid debt, that many productions veer their interpretations more toward the dramatic than the humorous."

Veteran actor George Hartpence - with the title roles of Hamlet, Macbeth and Richard III under his belt - tackles the challenging role of Shylock. "Back in Shakespeare's time and well into the 18th century, Shylock was often portrayed as a caricature: a demanding, farcical Jewish rogue lusting for money and revenge. Over time, the depth of the money-lender's character, so brilliantly underscored in the renowned 'Hath not a Jew eyes?' speech, proved irresistible to serious actors who saw in it a chance to tackle anti-Semitism head-on."

"George gives us a Shylock for our time - a man tormented because he too has been tormented," Ms. Doyle said. "You won't root for Shylock, but you will understand him. And you may not find it easy to root for his intended victim, Antonio; DeLarme Landes of Doylestown has the challenge of playing a man whose friends adore him but who is actively and unapologetically anti-Semitic. We are working hard to reconcile the play's 16th-century attitudes with our 21st-century sensibilities. Fortunately, Shakespeare has given us a lot of human truth to work with . . . and several lighter subplots to balance Shylock's part of the story."



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Kyla Mostello Donnelly of Levittown co-stars as Portia, whose "quality of mercy" speech ranks among Shakespeare's best - known. Brian Jason Kelly of Doylestown is Bassanio, Portia's love interest. Aaron Wexler of Philadelphia and Cat Miller of Bristol play lovers Gratiano and Nerissa. John Helmke of Hamilton, NJ and Amanda Hecht of Levittown portray lovers Lorenzo and Jessica.

Rounding out the cast are Michael Wurzel of Little Silver, NJ; John Wishnie of Morrisville; Mark Swift of Hamilton, NJ; Marco Newton of Yardley; Rob Norman of New Hope; Mort Paterson of Philadelphia; Darryl Thompson of Collingswood, NJ; Jim Cordingley of Lawrenceville, NJ; and Julia Mitchell of Yardley.

Kathleen Landes of Doylestown stage manages. Lighting designer Andrena Wishnie of Morrisville illuminates the set designed by George Hartpence. Costume and sound design are by Ms. Doyle.

The Merchant of Venice performs at the Heritage Center, 635 N. Delmorr Avenue (Route 32), Morrisville, PA. Show times are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$17 for seniors and \$10 for children age 12 and under. To reserve, reservations, call 215-295-3694 or email actorsnet@aol.com. On-line tickets can be purchased via www.brownpapertickets.com.

The NET'S website is www.actorsnetbucks.org. Social networking: Facebook page - "ActorsNET, AKA Actors' NET of Bucks County" and Twitter name @actorsnet.

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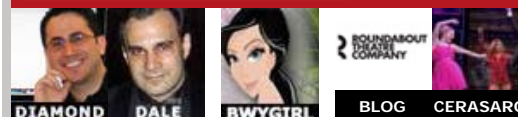
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