

Founded October, 1942 541st Production  
Monday, 20th to Saturday, 25th October, 1997 at 7.30 p.m.

Talisman Theatre Company  
presents  
**The Merchant of Venice**  
by William Shakespeare

Cast:-

Duke of Venice	Tony Burrows
Prince of Morocco	Trevor Thomas
Prince of Arragon	Tony Burrows
Antonio	John Fenner
Bassanio	Roger Harding
Portia	Mary MacDonald
Shylock	Emmanuel Toutoungi
Graiano	Thomas O'Connor
Salerio	Eric Taylor
Colanio	Ed Lewis
Lorenzo	Mark Roberts
Nerissa	Angela Collins
Jessica	Amy Heynes
Tubal	Trevor Thomas
Launcelot Gobbo	Mark Jeffries
Servants/Messengers	Joan Jury, Robert Draper,
	Anne Bennett
	Musician
	Alien Maslen

The play is set in Venice and a neighbouring country estate in Belmont. Approximately 270 lines have been cut and one character, Old Gobbo. Shakespeare probably wrote the play in 1598, but this production does not attempt to recreate that specific period. Our time is broadly at the end of the last century.

There will be one Interval of 15 minutes.

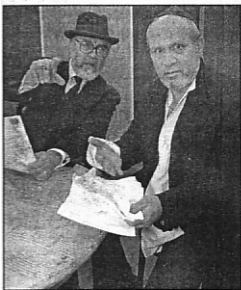
Directed by	William Wilkinson
Designed by	John Ellam
Lighting Design	Ian Roberts and William Wilkinson
Stage Manager	Sophie Hamilton
Sound	Dik Thacker
Assistant Stage Managers	Yvonne Shillington, Richard Orr and Alan Stacey
Wardrobe	Margaret Kentsbeer
Properties	Christine Rowe
Wigs	Sue Robottom

Set construction by John Ellam, assisted by Stuart Morris, Mick Ives, Tim Eden, Bob Caren, Richard Orr, Roy Baldwin and John O'Loughlin.

Production Photographs by Zoë Jolley

The Talisman Theatre would like to thank the GlobeGate Restaurant Catering Department, North Warwickshire College, for table linen.

This is a play often set aside in the belief that it is anti-Semitic. That would be to seriously diminish the intense humanity and even-handedness of Shakespeare.



Setting sail for the Mercant of Venice - Trevor Thomas as Tubal and Emmanuel Toutoungi as Shylock. Picture by Neville Collins. OC07197

## Brave choice pays off for Talisman

The Merchant of Venice - Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

THE Merchant of Venice is an ambitious choice for any amateur dramatists.

And although the Talisman clearly wanted a challenge to celebrate its 75th birthday, it was a risk that may not have paid off.

In fact it more than achieved what it set out to do. Despite playing to a disappointingly small audience the players rose to the challenge with ease.

Apart from a few fluffed lines, no doubt due to first night nerves, the strong cast gave a pretty solid performance.

The Merchant of Venice is one of Shakespeare's greatest triumphs and much was made of the themes which weave their way through it - love, money, justice and mercy.

And the play did not suffer from the 270 lines and one character cut from Shakespeare's original text.

Top performances were given by Mary MacDonald, Emmanuel Toutoungi and John Fenner.

Add that to an simple but effective set, long flowing gowns and bundles of enthusiasm from all, and any Shakespeare fan would have had more than their pound of flesh out of the Talisman's latest production.

Charlotte Bevers

## Bold show grips the attention

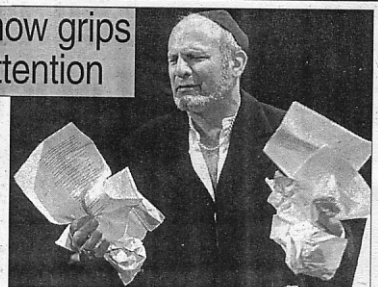
MERCHANT OF VENICE - The Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth until October 25. Running time: 2 1/2 hr

THE Talisman Theatre Company has created yet another winner with this bold production.

The Shakespearean comedy has been charged with anti-Semitism, making it an ambitious choice for amateurs.

But Emmanuel Toutoungi avoids the temptation to portray Shylock the Jew in a cartoonish fashion.

Thanks to his masterful treatment the audience has a complicated reaction to the money-lender.



MASTERFUL: Emmanuel Toutoungi is Shylock

One minute you loathe him for his harsh mean-spiritedness and a few scenes later he seems a victim of racist Christians.

The Merchant is a love story as well, and contains one of the Bard's meatiest

female roles. Portia is intelligent, witty, independent and ultimately saves the life of her husband's best friend.

Mary MacDonald is superbly cast as Portia, bringing the necessary energy to a wonderful character.

The Talisman must also be also be congratulated for bold and skillful cutting.

While the play has been shortened by about 270 lines, the effect is a welcome increase to the attention span.

Kristina Cooper

The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare at The Talisman Theatre

TRANSPLANTING Shakespeare into different eras often has the purists groaning but it works well for the Talisman Theatre's latest production.

The men don smart blazers and the ladies elegant full-length dresses of Victorian times in this version of the Bard's famous play.

The tale of the Jewish moneylender who wants his pound of flesh over an unpaid debt incurred by a Christian merchant is something of a dinosaur in terms

## Theatre at its most powerful

of its political correctness. But if you can put the anti-Jewishness of the late 16th century piece out of your mind, it doesn't date and is theatre at its most powerful.

The cast are all good but there are towering performances by Mary MacDonald as Portia and Emmanuel Toutoungi, who plays Shylock.

They are seen at their best in the final

court scene where Shylock aims to extract his revenge on merchant Antonio. The drama of this scene owes its strength not only to the playwright's words but to splendid acting by MacDonald and Toutoungi.

If I had one quibble it is that Bassanio (pictured with Portia and her maid), the suitor who wins Portia's hand, could have been younger as Shakespeare intended him to be something of an Adonis.

Nevertheless the play is excellent entertainment, ably directed by William Wilkinson with a simple, effective set by John Ellam. \*\*\*\* Mark Pendred

