

weudrama presents

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

The

Merchant

of Venice!

May 2016

wwudrama Presents
The Merchant of Venice
By William Shakespeare

About wwudrama

wwudrama is a Theatre Arts program on the Walla Walla University Campus. We are dedicated to creating uplifting, creative, and professional theatre for the community.

Beginning in 1961 Mrs. Donnie Rigby directed a stage play for the Walla Walla College women's club weekend. From this beginning, drama offerings expanded to a fully staged play being produced at least once a year. The rich tradition continues today, growing into two facilities and a full season, including two main stage productions, and an annual student-directed Festival of Shorts.

Director's Note—

The surprising thing about *The Merchant of Venice* is that it is actually considered one of Shakespeare's comedies. Shylock is probably one of the most best known characters in western theatre, but the larger story is about Bassanio seeking the hand of Portia in Belmont, where her father's will left her beholden to marry the man who chooses the right chest. The bond Antonio takes from Shylock for the now ubiquitous "pound of flesh" is a secondary story that complicates the main plot and results in the very dramatic court scene. That complicating of the narrative is great storytelling and the reason we are celebrating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. These stories hit the highs and lows of what it means to be human.

I think this story is particularly important on a Christian campus in which we are choosing how we want to engage with the larger culture. Things like theology, religious practice, ethnicity, race, and sub-culture all push us into little boxes of self-identity. When we consider only our own beliefs, our own faith, race, and culture, we leave no room for the enriching power of mutual understanding. For me the example of Jesus drives me to work at understanding the perspectives of others and is the reason am in theatre here on this campus. The opportunity to expose these actors to other mindsets, the opportunity to present a new way of seeing a person, idea, or belief to the campus and community, is an invaluable tool in reaching beyond ourselves. We are lucky with this play, because we also get to explore a time when America decided to look at another's perspective, those of its new rock-n-rollers and its Black citizens.

I chose to set this play in the 1950s because it is a time in American history that parallels many of the difficulties that were happening in Shakespeare's original. The developing world of the rock-n-roll counter-culture originated in 1955 with the very first hit rock song "Rock around the clock tonight." The juxtaposition of the formal and even staid world of Congress against the colorful world of the

Belmont Diner is a bit of a 1950s commentary on what I see as a current generational split. The millennial generation is grown and they don't seem to share the same values as their parents. That's not new, it seems to be a cycle that repeats, but in the world of the play, where formal and rock-n-roll must link hands and rely on one another, it provides an example of what could be.

The play also looks closely at what was occurring in American culture with civil rights. The play exposes our stereotypes of race, ethnicity, and religion in Antonio's treatment of Shylock the Jew and in Shylock's vicious response. Scholars question whether Shylock is really the villain since he is given the most human of monologues in his speech "Hath not a Jew eyes?" As modern audiences we are challenged to ask ourselves "who is the real hero and who the villain?" That same question of heroism is especially true when we are celebrating the triumph of the lovers and it is tainted with the flavors of persecution and bigotry.

I chose to make Shylock a Black Jew because the 1950s is the time of "brown v board of education" and Rosa Parks. It is a time when the civil rights movement finds its footing and is supported by the Jewish legal community. This made the perfect context to bring Shylock, a Black Jewish lawyer into the space of Antonio, the McCarthy-like congressman, and revisit our past using Shakespeare's narrative. In truth, I think this play asks more questions than it answers. In doing so, I hope that we as a campus and community can talk more clearly about how we might choose to love our neighbor.

Thank you for being here and thank you to my patient, loving wife and children. I have been gone almost every night and you have been supporting me throughout. Thank you to an incredible cast and crew who have worked tirelessly to pull this off in the tiny 6 week window I allowed. Enjoy the show.

Sincerely,

David Crawford

Era—

1955

Setting—

Washington, DC

Acts—

Act 1, Scene 1: Washington D.C. The Steps of Congress.

Act 1, Scene 2: Belmont Diner.

Act 1, Scene 3: Washington D.C. A public place.

Act 2, Scene 1: Belmont Diner.

Act 2, Scene 2: Washington D.C. A street.

Act 2, Scene 3: Washington D.C. Shylock's house.

Act 2, Scene 4: Washington D.C. A street.

Act 2, Scene 5: Washington D.C. Shylock's house.

Act 2, Scene 6: Washington D.C. Shylock's house.

Act 2, Scene 7: Belmont Diner.

Act 2, Scene 8: Washington D.C. A street.

Act 2, Scene 9: Belmont Diner.

Act 3, Scene 1: Washington D.C. A street.

Act 3, Scene 2: Belmont Diner.

Act 3, Scene 3: Washington D.C. A street.

Act 3, Scene 4: Belmont Diner.

Act 4, Scene 1: Washington D.C. A court of justice.

Act 4, Scene 2: Washington D.C. A street.

Act 5, Scene 1: Belmont Diner.

Cast—

Duke of Venice – Sophia Rich
Prince of Morocco – Elton Narciss
Prince of Aragon – Anthony Ochoa
Antonio – Jeremy Reed
Bassanio – Alex Bauer
Gratiano – Micah Hall
Salarino – Yvanna Hamman-Alvarez
Salanio – Abigail Wissink
Lorenzo – Joshua Ballance
Shylock – Tim Golden
Tubal – Kaelyn Nelson
Launcelot – Jeb Selby
Old Gobbo – Kyle Lambert
Leonardo – Brianna Summerlin
Balthasar – Grant Parfitt
Salerio – Megan McPherson
Portia – Lindsey Luna
Nerissa – Shannon Pierce
Jessica – Lori James

Crew—

Director – David Crawford
Assistant Director – Randall Lutz
Stage Manager – Gabrielle Pahler
Costume Designer – Randy Joe Wentworth
Lighting Design – Jeremy Reed
Lighting Board – TBD
Sound Design – Shannon Pierce
Sound Board – Bryce Weber
Props Master – Abigail Wissink
Set Design – David Crawford
Set Design – Randall Lutz
Graphic Design – Taylor Olson



The Kennedy Center

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival 49th, part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program, is generously funded by David and Alice Rubenstein.

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Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts and the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

Special Thanks —

Johannes Fackenthall
Ken Crawford
Terrie Aamodt

Bios—

Joshua Ballance is a freshman forensic psychology major and Spanish minor. This is his second show with wwudrama. He was last seen in *The Still Alarm*. He loves being part of the show and hopes you enjoy it.

Alex Bauer is a sophomore communications major and drama minor. He has been in a plethora of stage plays including *Grease*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Emma*, *Crazy for You*, and now *The Merchant of Venice*. He enjoys acting, singing, talking, impersonating, and eating. Not only that, but he is quite the film enthusiast.

David Crawford is the director of the drama program. He loves this play and is excited that we get to share it with you.

Tim Golden is making his second appearance in the WWU theatre. He played the role of James in the Fall 2015 show, *Katrina: The K Word*. His other roles include Jim Bono in August Wilson's *Fences*, *Wining Boy* in August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*, and *Ginny's Father/Julian Rainey* in *Court Martial at Fort Devens*. When he is not acting, he is Professor of Philosophy and a practicing attorney.

Micah Hall is a film and television major and a drama minor. He has been seen most recently in a professional self-defense video on YouTube. He likes grapefruit, lemon-flavored desserts, and jokes by Micah Hall.

Yvanna Hammen-Alvarez is a sophomore English major and art minor. This is her first show with wwudrama. Although new to the drama scene at WWU, she has flourished greatly in good humor and knowing her lines.

Lori James is a senior industrial design major. Although new to wwudrama and the great Northwest, she is no stranger to Shakespeare, having played Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* at age seven.

Kyle Lambert is a rare breed of Mechanical Engineering students. He has a drama minor and loves theatre. Usually he is designing or running lights, but this time he is back under the lights for his third performance. He has had two prior roles as Juror #4 in *12 Angry Men* and Robert Martin in *Emma*. He thinks this show is a hoot and half and hopes you will find it to be so!

Lindsey Luna (who prefers to be called Lin), is a first year English major. She is also a drama minor, because it keeps life busy and interesting – and let's be honest, if life is going to be full of drama, why not Shakespearean drama? She appeared in "The Pixie Girl League" in the Festival of Shorts during winter quarter, and this is her first stage play with wwudrama. Enjoy the show!

Randall Lutz is excited to be back in the drama sphere in a less intensive role. He is joining David as his assistant director and co-set designer. Enjoy the show!

Megan McPherson is a film and television major and Spanish minor. The last time she was on a stage was in high school musicals (musicals – not musical) and she is excited to be back. This is her first time in a wwudrama production and she is excited to be a man.

Elton Narciss is a communications major. He was last seen in *Katrina: The K word*.

Kaelyn Sandra Nelson is in her first wwudrama and is excited to be in many more. She is a Junior at ASU online, paid for by the Starbucks College Achievement Plan, double majoring in World Religion and World History. She loves being able to be part of the Walla Walla University scene and participating in as many random events as possible. "Life is short, have as many awkward conversations as possible."

Taylor Olson is awesome. LOL jk, David Crawford wrote this for her because she never gets her bios written on time.

Anthony Ochoa is an aspiring Shakespearean actor who recently moved to Walla Walla from Arizona, and jumped to the opportunity to audition for his favorite play by the Bard. Anthony would like to thank his cast mates for their hard work in making this play come to life.

Gabrielle Pahler is a Junior International Development Major looking forward to the great play that is Merchant for Venice! You probably saw her last in the 'K' Word in last Fall's production. She is now the Stage Manager working to make sure all runs smoothly. She has had a lot of fun working on the play and she hopes you enjoy it.

Grant Parfitt is a community member volunteering at College Place Fire Department. He was last seen in The Last Dance and has been in past plays such as Mother Courage and Sherlock Holmes: A Christmas Carol. He can't wait for this performance and hopes you enjoy watching it as much as he enjoyed acting in it.

Shannon Pierce is finally graduating, in a few short weeks, with communications major concentration in photojournalism and a drama and French minor. She was last seen on stage in "Katrina: the K Word" during fall quarter and directed "Sure Thing" for Festival of the Shorts winter quarter. She's excited to be graduating and moving on to the adult life (ha, jokes), however she's a little bummed she couldn't make her way into wwudrama until her 4th year here. She hopes you enjoy her sassy attitude on stage (and off) and that you enjoy the show.

Jeremy Reed is back on the WWU stage after six years away and is thrilled to be back. In his absence he attended Central Washington University, graduating with a degree in Theatre Arts. Recent shows have included, It's A Wonderful Life and Bus Stop at The Little Theatre of Walla Walla and directed One Tennis Shoe in WWU's most recent Festival of Shorts.

Sophia Rich is a junior English major and music minor who would also minor in drama if she had the time. She has assisted the WWU

drama department behind the scenes in the past, but she is especially excited to join the show this year as the Duke of Venice (aka the Duchess of Maryland. Time travel can be so confusing).

Jeb Selby is the youngest actor in our play. He is a sophomore at College Place High School, where he aspires to be a Shakespearian actor or a mechanic. This is his first production with wwudrama, and hopefully not the last.

Bri Sumerlin is a person but when no one is looking she pretends to be a unicorn. She also happens to be a 4th year Film major and Drama minor. She was last seen as the sound board operator for the festival of shorts. This is her first play and is excited to get down to business and defeat her lines and be a man. She hopes you enjoy the play and that you tell all of your friends about it.

Randy-Joe Wentworth is originally from Ephrata, WA. She graduated from Central Washington University in 2012 with a BA in Theatre. She now works at the Walla Walla Bread Company and uses her spare time to organize the WWU costume room! This is the first show that Randy Joe has fully costumed by herself and feels very excited and privileged to be given the opportunity!

Bryce Weber is a music major and drama minor. He ran sound for Katrina the K-word and is excited to be back.

Abigail Wissink is a senior humanities major and drama minor. She spends most of her free time in the theatre, including working as a Teaching Artist for Shakespeare Walla Walla and more recently working on The Festival of the Actors (June 4 and 5, Black Box!). This is her eleventh production with wwudrama. She likes black cats, lemon-flavored desserts, and jokes by Micah Hall.

Auditions—

It's a Wonderful Life

— the musical.

Dates: November 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 2016

Audition this quarter for next fall's production of "It's a Wonderful Life." wwudrama and Walla Walla University Music program are teaming up to present a musical adaptation of the famous film.

Directed by David Crawford

Music Direction by Kraig Scott

Voice Work by Christine Janis

Upcoming—

[title of show]

June 4 and 5 in the Donnie Rigby Black Box Theatre

Jeff and Hunter, two struggling writers, hear about a new musical theatre festival. However, the deadline for submissions is a mere three weeks away. With nothing to lose, the pair decides to try to create something new with the help of their friends Susan, Heidi and Larry on the eighty-eights. With the cast in place, Jeff and Hunter begin a conversation about what to write about. Eventually, Jeff suggests they write about what to write about. They make a pact to write up until the festival's deadline and dream about the show changing their lives. [title of show]—taken from the space on the festival's application form which asks for the [title of show]—follows Hunter and Jeff and their friends on their journey through the gauntlet of creative self-expression. In the span of 90 minutes they write and perform their show at the festival and learn lessons about themselves as people, friends and artists. [title of show] is, above all, a love letter to the musical theatre—a uniquely American art form—and to the joy of collaboration. The musical received a Tony Award® nomination for Best Book of a Musical in 2009.

Interested in drama?

Drama Program Info...

A student minoring in Drama gets to spend time: Acting, Directing, Writing, Designing sets and costumes, and hanging around creative people. It is the perfect way to find your voice as a professional.

Interested? Email david.crawford@wallawalla.edu