



The Moot House Players

present

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

by William Shakespeare

Characters in order of appearance :

ANTONIO, a rich merchant of Venice ...	Charles Hill
SOLANIO, friend to Antonio and Bassanio ...	Richard Morley
BASSANIO, friend to Antonio, suitor to Portia ...	Lawrence Surridge
GRATIANO, friend to Bassanio ...	Terry Lamb
LORENZO, in love with Jessica ...	George Tarry
PORTIA, a rich heiress ...	Yvonne Mitchell
NERISSA, her gentlewoman ...	Jill Williams
BALTHAZAR, her serving man ...	Tom Nolan
SHYLOCK, a rich Jew ...	Don Henderson
THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, suitor to Portia ...	Gordon Hewlett
LAUNCELOT GOBBO, the clown, servant to Shylock ...	Robin Harcourt
OLD GOBBO, his father ...	Jack Mitchell
JESSICA, daughter to Shylock ...	Goolmoir Dhalla
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, suitor to Portia ...	Jack Mitchell
TUBAL, a Jew, friend to Shylock ...	Peter Banyard
THE DUKE OF VENICE ...	Gordon Hewlett
SINGER ...	Jennifer Surridge
ATTENDANTS, OFFICERS, PEASANTS, ETC.	Bettina Hewlett, Harry Edwards

The scene is set in Venice and Belmont

The Play produced by Jack Mitchell

Properties by Gordon and Bettina Hewlett. Costumes designed and executed by Laws. Music arranged from the works of seventeenth century composers by John Genower and played by Alan Alpin, David Coochey and Alan Notschild. Dance arranged by Leo Kersley. Wigs by Gustave.

Stage Staff: Bettina Hewlett and Harry Edwards

The play will be given in two parts with one interval

NOTES

THE PLAY.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE is one of Shakespeare's best known comedies and was probably written in 1596, although the first printed edition which is known is dated 1600. The stories of the "pound of flesh" and "the caskets" were well known and Shakespeare was dramatising "fairy tales" which were very old even in his day. Modern treatment of the play tends to turn Shylock into a semi-tragic character, which is undoubtedly very far removed from the Elizabethan's approach, and this can give the oddest emphasis to the piece if allowed to dominate the production. Like most Elizabethan comedies, it has its cruel side, but it is full of gaiety and lightness and we have tried to treat it as a charming fairy tale with a happy ending.

THE PRODUCTION.

The present production was staged for the first time at the Rogaland Civic Theatre, Stavanger, Norway, in August 1961, as part of an interchange of cultural activities between Harlow and its "twin town." On this occasion it was given six performances with a cast of 28 on a proscenium stage; it has now been re-produced for touring in England, which has entailed reducing the cast to 17 and transferring the action to an open-stage. The text has also been cut to reduce the running time to more manageable proportions and the parts of Solanio, Salarino and Salerio combined into one. The general interpretation of the play follows that of the Norwegian presentation, however, except that regional accents used by some of the comedy characters have been strengthened.

The production will be available for touring dates up to July 1962 and enquiries for bookings should be addressed to Mrs. Eileen Spraggon, 114 Pennymead, Harlow, Essex.