

Class 12

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

by William Shakespeare

6th 7th 8th December, 7.30pm
Petone West Building (the gym)

Entry: \$15 and \$10 (concession)

Don't miss this masterpiece by the master of all play-writes!
Made famous by Shylock's demand for 'a pound of flesh';
by Portia's speech 'The quality of mercy is not strained';
Lorenzo's extraordinary 'sound of music' speech;
and many, many other dramatic high points.

Out of favour for a number of years, The Merchant of Venice has recently made a comeback. Mostly because the play is SO good, but also because a closer look reveals it to be a deeply compassionate piece of writing; and certainly far too complex to dismiss as racist.

For example, one can easily empathise with Shylock, notwithstanding the cruelty of his 'bond'. It is no accident that he demands the pound of flesh be cut out 'nearest the heart'; and in an earlier exchange with Antonio states: "I would be friends with you and have your love, Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with".

Even if only metaphorically, Shylock is appealing for Antonio's heart (granted in a shocking manner).

But the play is actually a comedy, with three marriages realised by the end.

The money Antonio borrows of Shylock furnishes his great friend, Bassanio, with the means to sail off on an adventure to win his love, the wise and fair Portia.

Parallel plots of romance unfold, full of imagination, beauty, rich wisdom and humour! Enough...tickets on sale at the Office!