

— Parodos Theatre Company presents —

AN OPEN-AIR THEATRE EXPERIENCE

# THE MERCHANT OF VENICE



IN THE VILLA MARINA GARDENS

7<sup>TH</sup> - 9<sup>TH</sup> SEP 2023





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# A MESSAGE FROM



# RAVENSCROFT

Welcome to The Merchant of Venice, Parodos Theatre Company's second production which we are delighted to say is a sell out success.

Ravenscroft sponsored Parodos' first production, Much Ado About Nothing, in April last year and Charlie and Alex set the bar incredibly high with a talented cast and crew. Their passion for theatre is inspiring and we had absolutely no hesitation in agreeing to be the principal sponsor of their second production.

Once again, the pair has brought together an incredible group of actors and an experienced crew who have spent many hours rehearsing and we are all in for a wonderful open air theatre experience in what is a beautiful and iconic location. The Merchant of Venice is one of Shakespeare's most well-known and studied works and explores themes of love, justice, prejudice and mercy.

For those of you who aren't familiar with Ravenscroft, we have had an office in the Isle of Man for three years and as our business has grown so has our support of the local community. We have sponsored the Isle of Man Cricket Association's Cric Start programme and Isle of Man Rugby for three seasons. We have supported the Manx Breast Cancer Support Group with its fundraising gin and champagne trains in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

We have also supported the IoD and Chamber of Commerce and we are one of the sponsors of the South African Chamber of Commerce's SSAFA Festival later this month. We have also supported numerous smaller charities.

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We hope you enjoy your evening!

## GREG EASTON

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
*Ravenscroft (IOM) Limited*





# VG VILLAGAIETY

A lot of the team will agree that I have a soft spot for the gardens at Villa Marina; seeing the children playing football of an afternoon is a delight, as is walking past older members of the community soaking up the sun whilst reading a book. On a personal level I have fond memories of the original grounds from my parents being married here when I was a child.

Historically the gardens have played an important role in the tourist offering of the Island, and provided locals an important, open space to enjoy close to the high street. In our heritage we staged variety shows, live music and theatre in the grounds, and today regularly host national events that shape the Island calendar such as the upcoming Isle of Man Food and Drink Festival.

Our gardening team are passionate about the upkeep of the gardens

for the benefit of the community, and much work goes into the management of the site to remain open to the public 362 days a year.

Parodos Theatre Company approaching us with an idea to animate the grounds with such a classic Shakespearean play was incredibly well timed, and we're grateful to them for their openness and collaboration in taking the leap with us as we explore the development of a live outdoor programme.

And of course, thank you to you, the audience who have decided to go on this adventure with us.

Here's to a lovely evening of outdoor theatre to celebrate the end of the summer and the start of something new at VillaGaiety. We welcome any feedback on your experience and what you might want to see next in the gardens.

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(PG/13633/1/1960/223/2)

## SARAH WILSON-WHITE

### HEAD OF CULTURE & ARTS



# PARODOS THEATRE COMPANY

# WELCOME

Welcome to Parodos Theatre Company's production of The Merchant of Venice. Following on from the success of our debut production of Much Ado About Nothing in 2022, Parodos is excited to once again bring classic theatre to the Manx public (this time with a bit of a 1920s feel).

We are thrilled to bring this show to the beautiful Villa Marina Gardens, the first of its kind here for a long time. There is nothing like theatre in the great Manx outdoors and we have to thank VillaGaiety for trusting us to use this space and bring this performance to life. We must also thank our sponsors, Ravenscroft, Cains Advocates, Blackford & Co, and Gear Industries for supporting this production.

The Merchant of Venice is one of Shakespeare's comedies, however the play has been controversial due to some of its underlying themes of prejudice, antisemitism and revenge.

In preparing for this play however, our cast has found that Shakespeare's writing leaves little room to discern any real hero or villain in this play and demonstrates the many flaws of the human condition. If however any themes of this production impact any of our audience, we would encourage you to speak to any of the dedicated charities on this matter.

Yet The Merchant of Venice is also filled with romance and humour. Our wonderfully talented cast has brought all of these elements together and we must thank them the whole production team and our brilliant director David Dawson, who again returns to take the helm.

So thank you for your support and we hope you enjoy the show. Please follow us on social media for all the latest information and don't forget to tag us!  
@Parodostheatre

## ALEX ARMSTRONG & CHARLIE WILLIAMS



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THE MERCHANT OF  
VENICE





# SCENES

## ACT I

SCENE 1: A street in Venice  
SCENE 2: Portia's house, Belmont  
SCENE 3: A public place, Venice

## ACT II

SCENE 2: A street in Venice  
SCENE 1: Portia's house, Belmont  
SCENE 7: Portia's house, Belmont  
SCENE 3: Shylock's house, Venice  
SCENE 4: A street in Venice  
SCENE 5: Before Shylock's house, Venice  
SCENE 6: Before Shylock's house, Venice  
SCENE 8: A street in Venice  
SCENE 9: Portia's house, Belmont

## ACT III

SCENE 1: A street in Venice

- *INTERVAL* -

## ACT III

SCENE 2: Portia's house, Belmont  
SCENE 3: A street in Venice  
SCENE 4: Portia's house, Belmont

## ACT IV

SCENE 1: Court of Justice, Venice  
SCENE 2: A street in Venice

## ACT V

SCENE 1: Outside Portia's house, Belmont

# SYNOPSIS

## ACTS I-III

We have transported the setting of Shakespeare's classic to the roaring twenties, a time of decadence, jazz and the odd boater hat.

We open at the home of Antonio, a Venetian merchant, as he complains to his friends Salanio and Salarino that he is in a state of unexplained melancholy. His two friends tease him as they can see no reason for him to be sad, when he is so wealthy and has many trading ventures underway around the world. Their teasing is however interrupted by the arrival of other friends, among them Bassanio who seeks a loan from Antonio. As Bassanio has spent the majority of his own money, he seeks the loan to help him travel in style to the estate of Portia, a wealthy heiress who lives in Belmont. Antonio is unable to advance the loan himself, due to his fortunes being tied up in the various trading ventures he has abroad, so he instead suggests that Bassanio, relying on Antonio's good credit, seeks a loan from one of one of Venice's moneylenders.

Portia meanwhile, complains to her maid and close friend Nerissa about her inability to chose her own husband. Her late father has stipulated in his will that Portia must marry the man who correctly choses one of three luggage cases. The suitors who have arrived from around the world seeking Portia's hand are not to her liking and she and Nerissa gossip about the various men who have come to seek her hand, listing their faults and her worries should they select the right case. Nerissa however reminds Portia of Bassanio, who Portia fondly remembers.

With Antonio's credit, Bassanio and Antonio visit a Jewish moneylender named Shylock. Shylock has suffered antisemitic abuse from the Christian population of Venice, particularly the Christian merchants who berate his practice of usury; the charging of interest on loans. Shylock recalls the abuses levelled on him by Antonio, for which Antonio refuses to apologise and in fact suggests he will continue, suggesting that Shylock should loan the money to his enemy as opposed to his friend. Shylock agrees to loan the money and without interest but in return demands an unusual bond; a pound of Antonio's flesh, should he forfeit the loan. Antonio agrees, confident the loan will be repaid from his trading ventures abroad.





# SYNOPSIS

Meanwhile, Shylock's servant Launcelot is seeking to leave his service and confides so in Shylock's kind daughter Jessica. Jessica herself has fallen in love with a young Venetian named Lorenzo but knows her father will never agree to allow her to marry a Christian. Lorenzo and Jessica therefore make plans to elope, assisted by Gratiano and Salarino. They escape whilst Shylock is out, along with some of Shylock's money and jewels. Bassanio leaves for Belmont, to be followed by Gratiano.

Portia during this time is forced to entertain two further suitors. The Prince of Morrocco and the Prince of Arragon. Each are clearly not for Portia but each selects the incorrect luggage case, blinded by desire and a misguided sense of their own self worth. Shortly thereafter, Portia is informed of Bassanio's arrival.

Our first half ends with Shylock discovering his daughter's flight along with the loss of his money. He is furious and seeks revenge against the ones who have stolen his only child from him. He rails at Salanio and Salarino, who tease him about his predicament, about how he will seek vengeance and notes how alike in character he is to the Christians who berate him in that regard. His friend Tubal, who Shylock has sent to look for Jessica, returns to inform him of how she has spent his money and lost his late wife's ring. Shylock is distraught but is pleased to hear of the apparent loss of Antonio's ships abroad; he has an opportunity for his revenge.

## - INTERVAL -

## ACTS III-V

Following the interval, we arrive in Belmont, where Bassanio is to choose between the cases. They have already declared their love for one another and Portia tries to delay Bassanio from choosing as long as possible, in case he chooses the wrong case. Bassanio however wishes to be allowed his chance and, correctly identifies the case holding fair Portia's photograph. They are jubilant and Gratiano even confirms that he has fallen in love with Nerissa. The couples agree to be married and Portia and Nerissa give their husbands rings, making them swear not to lose them under any circumstances. The celebrations however are marred by news of Antonio's losses at sea and the consequent insistence by Shylock that his bond be enforced; a pound of Antonio's flesh.

Bassanio and Gratiano return to Venice and Portia tricks Lorenzo and Jessica, who have also come, into thinking that she and Nerissa will go into isolation until their husbands return. They in fact have other ideas.

The Duke of Venice holds a hearing to decide the issue of Shylock's claim to Antonio's flesh. Ignoring the Duke's discontent for Shylock and his pleas for mercy, Shylock insists on his bond, even refusing multiple times the value of the loan, all of which Portia is willing to pay for Bassanio's friend. The Duke insists upon a learned lawyer from Padua, Dr Bellario, to come to the Court and help determine the case. Instead however, a strange looking clerk arrives to inform the Court that Dr Bellario cannot come and has instead sent a junior lawyer in his stead. The clerk is Nerissa in disguise and the lawyer, Portia.

In disguise as the lawyer, Portia pleads with Shylock once again for mercy. Shylock refuses and Portia notes that the bond does entitle him to the pound of flesh. Yet as he is about to claim this from Antonio and exact his revenge, Portia reminds Shylock that the bond does not entitle him to take any blood. He is therefore caught out and unable to take the bond without endangering the life of Antonio in contravention of the bond. He asks to take the offer of money and go but Portia denies him all but his bond. When he cannot take it, he is told his life and goods are forfeit for seeking to endanger the life of a citizen of Venice; he, due to his religion, being considered an 'alien'. The Duke however pardons Shylock, who leaves the Court disgraced and humiliated, forced to give half his goods on death to Lorenzo and to also become a Christian.

Bassanio and Antonio thank the young lawyer, failing to see through Portia's disguise. She decides to test her husband's faith by demanding his ring from her in return. Bassanio hesitates but is cajoled into giving it by Antonio. Nerissa separately convinces Gratiano to give up her ring. Back in Belmont, Portia and Nerissa arrive before the others and change back into their normal attire. On the arrival of Bassanio and Gratiano, Portia and Nerissa feign surprise and sadness at the loss of the rings. Forcing Bassanio and Gratiano to grovel, they finally reveal that they have the rings and how they came by them. Nerissa reveals to Jessica and Lorenzo the deed of gift from Shylock and Antonio learns that his ships are actually safe to harbour and his fortune saved.



# WHO IS WHO IN THE MERCHANT OF VENICE





# CREATIVE TEAM



*Director*

**DAVID DAWSON**

David has directed many productions on the Island, including the highly acclaimed 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame' with Douglas Choral Union at the Gaiety Theatre in February 2022. This is only his third time directing Shakespeare though and he has enjoyed the challenge it has brought.

David has had great success flying the flag for the Island within the Arts with his short film 'Limelight' winning in many international film festivals including Amsterdam and Oregon, with the film also being selected as finalist in Scotland, Arizona and Paris.

David recently directed the Kensington Arts Youth drama group, who performed at the National Theatre Connections final at the National Theatre, London.

*Shylock*

THOMAS IAIN DIXON

*Portia*

BRYONY GRANT

*Antonio*

JOHN WALKER

*Jessica*

MEG WALKER

*Bassanio*

DANIEL-SEBASTIAN GRAY

*Gratiano*

PETER SHIMMIN

*Lorenzo*

BEN GALE

*Nerissa*

JADE BOYLAN

*Launcelot Gobbo*

ORRY WILSON

*Prince of Morocco*

ALEX DUNCAN

*Prince of Arragon*

GEOFFREY PUGH

*Salarino*

CHARLIE WILLIAMS

*Salanio*

SEAN REANEY

*Duke of Venice*

CHRIS JAGUS

*Tubal*

ANDY WILLIAMS

*Producer*

PARODOS THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED

*Original Script*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Script Adaptation*

ALEX ARMSTRONG, CHARLIE WILLIAMS

*Director*

DAVID DAWSON

*Assistant Director*

SARAH HOLLAND

*Company Stage Manager*

ALEX ARMSTRONG

*Deputy Stage Manager*

SARAH HOLLAND

*Lighting Designer*

ALEX ARMSTRONG

*Lighting & Sound*

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JAMES BARCLAY

*Sound Engineer*

JAMES BARCLAY

*Set Design*

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JUDE FULLERTON

*Head of Wardrobe*

JUDE FULLERTON

*Props*

ALEX ARMSTRONG, JUDE FULLERTON, CHARLIE WILLIAMS

*Posters, Programme &*

KELLY FIRTH

*Creative Design*

*Front of House*

LAURA ECKERSLEY





*Shylock*

## THOMAS IAIN DIXON

Far more at home on the Gaiety stage singing in musicals, Iain is, nonetheless, absolutely delighted to be partaking in his first Shakespeare play with Parodos, especially within the wonderful environs of the Villa Gardens. The role of Shylock is an enjoyable, if challenging, one, to which he hopes to do great justice. If the weather treats us all kindly, he firmly believes that this will be a unique and memorable experience.



*Portia*

## BRYONY GRANT

Usually much more comfortable as a member of the ensemble in a musical, Bryony has thrown herself well and truly out of her comfort zone to be a part of The Merchant of Venice. Previous shows include Young Frankenstein and The Hunchback of Notre Dame with the Douglas Choral Union. Bryony would like to thank her wonderful friends who helped her learn her lines and provided her with much needed support and encouragement. Enjoy the show!



*Antonio*

## JOHN WALKER

John has been involved in drama in the Isle of Man for over 20 years and has performed with various local societies including Service Players, Arbory Players, Hog The Limelight and Parker & Snell for One Act and full length plays.

John is looking forward to bringing Antonio to the stage in his now second production with Parodos Theatre Company.



*Jessica*

## MEG WALKER

Meg is very excited to take on the challenge of performing Shakespeare outdoors, and has had so much fun rehearsing as part of Parodos and exploring the role of Jessica. When it comes to Shakespeare, Meg has previously played Tranio in The Taming of the Shrew, as well as both Bottom and Hermia in A Midsummer Night's Dream. She is very grateful to be a part of this show and hopes you enjoy this Shakespeare classic!



*Bassanio*

## DANIEL-SEBASTIAN GRAY

Dan is thrilled to join Parodos for their second production in one of his favourite Shakespeare plays and can't wait to bring it to the beautiful Villa Marina Gardens! Previous roles in Shakespeare include Malvolio (Twelfth Night), Antonio (a different Twelfth Night), Kate (Taming of the Shrew), and an entertaining cameo whilst hiding under a bedsheet as the Ghost of Hamlet...(this is a firm favourite).



*Gratiano*

## PETER SHIMMIN

This is Peter's first show with Parodos and first-time performing Shakespeare. An active member of the musical theatre scene, Peter recently performed in Taylorian's production of 'Kinky Boots'. He has also appeared in shows with the DCU and Stage Door Ents. By day, Peter works in communications for Government where he hopes his writing skills are better than his Shakespearean verse. He is thrilled to be part of this exciting production and hopes you can enjoy/understand most of the show!





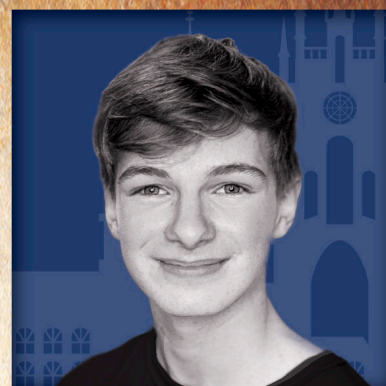
*Lorenzo*  
**BEN GALE**

Ben is thrilled to be a part of The Merchant of Venice. After 9 years of performing mostly musical theatre, this will be Ben's second experience of a play following Much Ado About Nothing last year. Ben's most recent performances include Tony Giordano in The Full Monty and Sonny LaTierri in Grease. Following Merchant of Venice, he will next be performing in the ensemble of Evita in February next year. Ben hopes you enjoy the show!



*Nerissa*  
**JADE BOYLAN**

Jade is a local artist and designer, she works full time from home running her own small business. She also chairs the visual art and literature panel for the Isle of Man Arts Council. Other than public speaking, this is her first time back on the stage since high school. A lifelong fan of Shakespeare, Jade is very excited to be making her Parodos debut playing Nerissa. She would like to thank the cast and crew for being so welcoming.



*Launcelot Gobbo*  
**ORRY WILSON**

Orry is 16 and studies drama with Carrie Hunt at Broadway Theatre Company. He is the current Young Actor of Mann and has been a regular participant in The Guild and MADF play festivals. He has performed with The Service Players, Centre Stage, the All Island Theatre Company and this is his second time performing with Parodos Theatre Company. He recently took part in Isle Listen Young Stars of Mann concert and also took part in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival with Parker & Snell Youth Company.



*The Prince of Morocco*  
**ALEX DUNCAN**

Alex trained at the National Youth Theatre and the Guildford School of Acting where he was awarded the Principal's Acting Award. His theatre credits include: Hamlet (RSC) Twelfth Night (Creation Theatre) Tunes of Glory (Middleground Theatre) Caught in the Net (National Tour) Taking Steps (International Tour) Henry V (Richmond Theatre) TIMES award for Best Actor A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest (National Tour). He is now Head of Drama at the Buchan School.



*The Prince of Arragon*  
**GEOFFREY PUGH**

Geoff has had the privilege of playing a number of fantastic characters in plays and musicals since he returned to the stage in 2019, including the dastardly Baron Scarheart in the Service Players' production of Dick Barton, Special Agent; the butler Drake in Annie for Centre Stage Productions and most recently as the Monster in DCU's amazing run of Young Frankenstein. He is delighted to be joining this talented cast for his first outing with Parodos and very much hopes to be asked back.



*Salarino*  
**CHARLIE WILLIAMS**

Following from the success of Much Ado About Nothing, Charlie is proud to bring Manx audiences another of Shakespeare's classics with The Merchant of Venice. Charlie has been in a number of plays at the Gaiety and has even dipped his toe into the musicals scene in recent years but producing a play as one half of the team at Parodos is always a rewarding challenge. Charlie thanks everyone for the continued support of Parodos and he and Alex hope to bring many more shows to the Island in future.





*Salanio*

## SEAN REANEY

Sean is still quite wet behind the ears when it comes to performing in front of a crowd, but nonetheless was thrilled to be given the chance to try his hand at Shakespeare. He has definitely found learning so many lines a bit challenging but nonetheless has loved every minute of it! Merchant of Venice is wonderfully funny and full of character, Sean can't wait for you all to experience what we've all worked so hard to produce for you. You'll receive a pound of our flesh and more!



*The Duke of Venice*

## CHRIS JAGUS

This is Chris' second play with Parodos having played Friar Francis in Much Ado About Nothing. He has previously been involved with musical theatre and still hasn't got used to the fact that in Shakespeare nobody bursts randomly into song or a tap routine every five minutes! With DCU he played a number of roles in Spamalot, Max Detweiler in the Sound of Music, a large bear in Shrek and a very prudent King Louis in Hunchback.



*Tubal*

## ANDY WILLIAMS

The Merchant of Venice is Andy's first foray in to Shakespeare. Although he studied it for O Level English Literature, he seemed to have completely forgotten everything about it before rehearsals began (alas, it was many decades ago...). Andy's stage career started with Douglas Choral Union in 2019 appearing in "Spamalot" and most recently in 2023 with "Young Frankenstein". He hopes you enjoy the show as much as he has enjoyed rehearsing it!



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# THANK YOU

There are far too many people to list who have supported our production but we thank them all.  
In particular:

Onchan Parish Hall for use of their space  
as rehearsals venue

St Peter's Church for use of their space as  
a rehearsals venue

The VillaGaiety staff and support teams

The team at Gear Industries for lighting  
and sound equipment

Douglas Choral Union and Three Legs  
Productions for assistance with props

James Davis of Isle of Man Advertising  
for assistance with roadside banners

Kelly Firth for all her patience and  
support in producing posters and other  
fantastic marketing materials

Manx Theatre Podcast

The Sefton for use of luggage trolleys

All those who have kindly displayed  
posters for us

And YOU, the Manx going theatre  
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# CHARITY COLLECTIONS

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FRIDAY 8TH APRIL

Scout Association

SATURDAY 9TH APRIL (MATINEE)

Victim Support Isle of Man

SATURDAY 9TH APRIL (EVENING)

Manx Wildlife Trust

# EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the unlikely event of the fire alarm sounding, the performance will be paused. Please congregate at the entrance to the Villa Marina. There are no scheduled fire alarm tests.

# NOTICE TO PATRONS

Photos are permitted but please refrain from flash photography. The Villa Marina Gardens are a non-smoking area for this performance and this includes the use of e-cigarettes.

*There will be a single interval of approximately 30 minutes.*





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