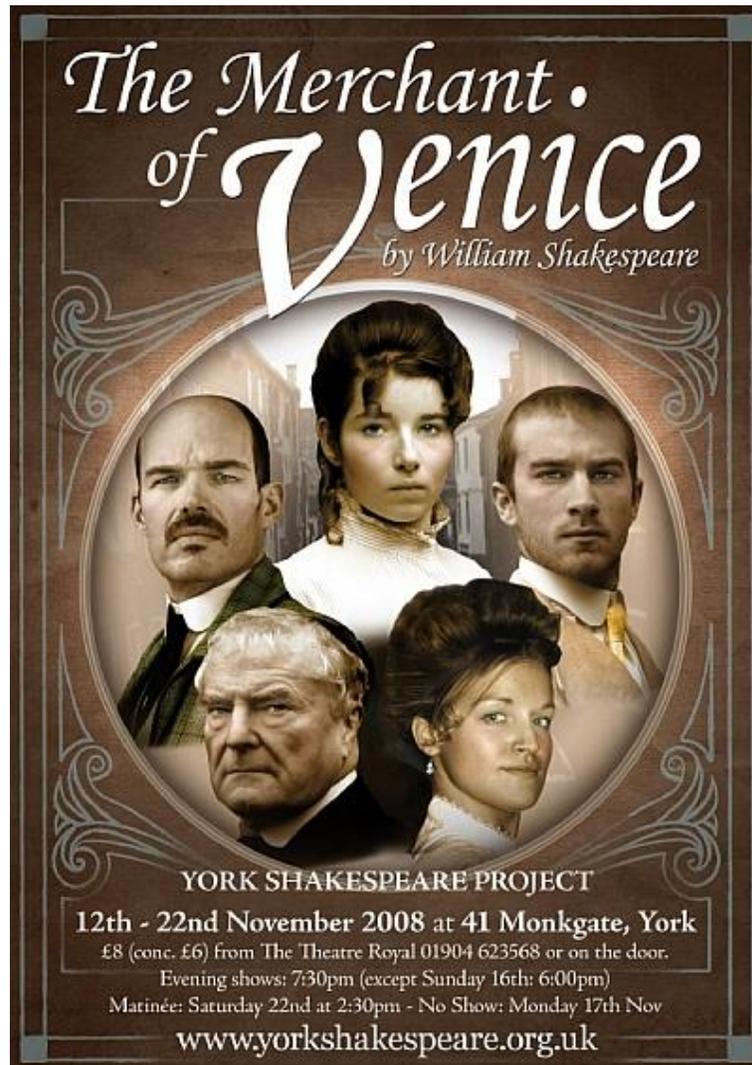


# YORK SHAKESPEARE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

November 2008

*“the sound of shallow foppery”*



## **The Merchant of Venice**

It's almost here!!! In fact there it is, just coming round the corner, dabbing on the greasepaint, going over its lines one last time, running through the dance routines for fun, it's... The Merchant of Venice, the YSP Autumn production for 2008. It stars new friends and old, has some rather moving music and contains the finest collection of moustaches this side of a meeting between Hercule Poirot, Salvador Dali and Tom Selleck. Or your money back!\*

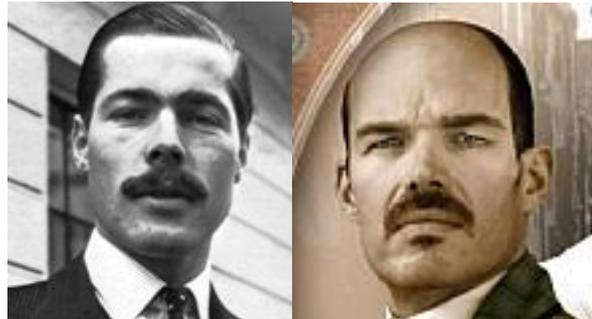
It opens on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30 pm and continues until Saturday 22 November. All shows are at 7.30 pm EXCEPT that there is also a matinee on Saturday 22 at 2.30 pm, the show on Sunday 16 starts at 6.00 pm, and there is no show on Monday 17.

The play is on at 41 Monkgate, which is either just next door to the big Methodist church on Monkgate, or just up the road from the Tap and Spile, depending on your preference. Nearest car parking is the one just off Lord Mayor's Walk, although do make sure there is a place left for Anna to park or there will be no Minstrels at the interval.

Tickets are a bargain at £8.00, a bargain at twice the price in fact, with £6.00 for concessions and £4.00 for under- 11s, and are available from either the Theatre Royal box office, or you can get them on the door. Opening night tickets are just £6.00 each! And YSP members get the concessionary rate! You couldn't make it up!

\*no money back.

**Not seen him since?**



Lord Lucan (left) vanished in 1972 after supposedly bumping off his children's nanny and then legging it, spotted at various points around the world since – never legally declared dead.

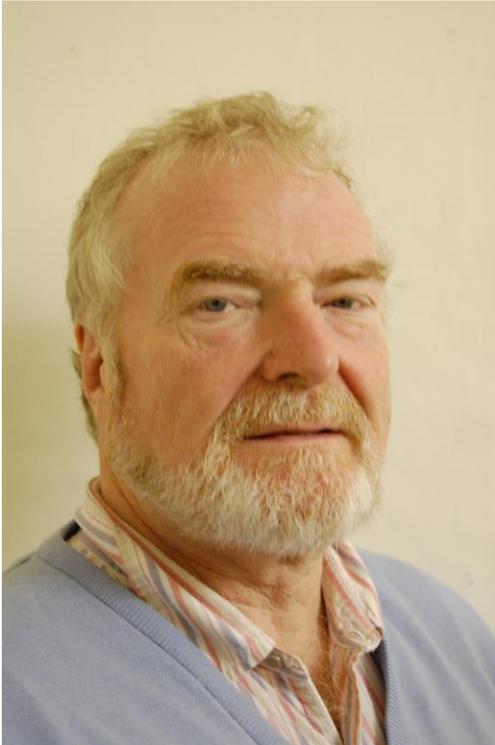
Brian Sharp (right) moved to York 1973, a major player in the York Shakespeare Project ever since, caused a sensation in Richard III by killing the nanny of the Princes in the Tower and then legging it.

Any other shabby lookalikekeys etc will be printed, send suggestions to the email address below.

**Five questions for Ged Murray...**

Hello Ged, you're playing Shylock any second now, what's been the biggest challenge of playing this part?

The most important challenge for me is to make sure that what the audience sees is man who is an individual who is suffering great pain. This is a man who having spent years struggling with institutional and individual anti-Semitism has then to deal with a rejection of all he is by the one person he thought he could trust-his daughter. Unless one gets the humanity of the man his actions can appear monstrous so promoting both historic and current anti-Semitism.



How hard does it make it that Shylock is one of the best known characters in Shakespeare?

I am not sure that people do really know the Shylock of Shakespeare. I think that what is in the public imagination is a stereotypical and often crude image of a medieval Jew. That image while seeming to be based on our shared sense of history and therefore seemingly harmless is still part of our approach to present realities, so for example I have found it interesting that having told folk I was playing Shylock any subsequent comments I have made as Ged Murray about dealing with something in an efficient and economical manner has meet with a refrain along the lines of "stop being a Shylock". The Shylock of Shakespeare is a complex and complicated character with failings but then the other major characters in the play have their own major failings which explain why Shylock acts the way he does.

How have you found the process of rehearsing the play?

Great fun because we have such a wonderful cast and crew. Some folk are old friends while others are new to YSP. It's also good to have a wide age range with some people still at school and others retired. Our director Cecily Boys has brought to this production an innovative approach to the script and staging that is quite demanding but because the rehearsal schedule has been constructed in a way that gives all the actors confidence that we can reach the standards expected by Cecily the rehearsal process has stretched us while allowing us to stay (just) within our comfort zone.

Without giving too much away, do you think Shylock gets what he deserves?

No I think the way he is treated at the moment of his defeat continues the Anti-Semitism he faced when he was simply going about his normal business. Other characters face no censure for their racism, anti-Semitism or betrayal of family.

And finally, why should the good people of York come and see the play? It's all hotting up in Eastenders you know.

Well, given that we have 11 performances it is possible to keep up with all your favourite TV shows & still see the Merchant of Venice two or three times. However, those who do follow Eastenders need to be warned that our storylines are rather more adult than what happens in the Queen Vic. Come and be shocked by what happens on the Rialto!

### **Also coming soon...**

More sensational than the second test in the 2005 Ashes, the Mooted Theatre Co bring us John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's A Whore directed by Mark France, and starring Andy Curry, Lara Pattison, Toby Gordon and Neil Tattershall, also from previous YSP productions. It can be found on 13<sup>th</sup> November at the Suns Pavillions, Harrogate, 14<sup>th</sup> November at the Mart Theatre, Skipton, 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> November at the Carriageworks in Leeds and 27<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> November at the Friargate Theatre here in York. The production contains material that may offend, so it might not be one for all the family! Box office numbers and ticket details can be found on their website at [www.mootedtheatre.com](http://www.mootedtheatre.com).

### **Been and Gone**

Many YSP alumni appeared in Vanity Fair by Settlement Players, directed by Roger Calvert. Fantastic performances all round, and always nice to see Sam Valentine doing his turn as a lady, not once, but twice! Well done everybody, a grand night out!

### **Coming next year**

The York Shakespeare Project will be producing Julius Caesar and Richard II next year, so togas and hot pokers all round, hurrah!!

### **I'm so alone**

Do feel free to contribute anything to the newsletter, and I really do mean anything. Bingbong me an email to [mr.alistair@talk21.com](mailto:mr.alistair@talk21.com) with news, gossip, photos otherwise next month will be more of my idle blearings.

For sooth!