

## CALENDAR

**CRIMES OF THE HEART**, directed by Shyum Selvardi, Samuel Beckett Theatre, Nov. 18-22, 112 Stong College, 8:00 p.m.

**WILLIAM PITTMAN**, head of Ontario Arts Council will lecture in **PRIME TIME**, Nov. 12, Burton Auditorium, Atkinson College, 12:30-2:00 p.m.

## CALENDAR

**CHOIR CONCERT**, York chamber choir under the direction of Albert Greer, Nov. 21, McLaughlin Hall, 5:00 p.m.

## THEATRE

**CANDIDE**, adapted from Voltaire's novel by Andrew Clark and David Borenstein, performed by York drama students, Nov. 25-28, Samuel Beckett Theatre, 112 Stong College, 7:30 p.m. Free.

## CALENDAR

**STUDENT CHAMBER CONCERT**, performances given by various student ensembles, Nov. 21, McLaughlin Hall, 12:30 p.m.

**MUSIC COLLOQUIUM**, current graduate music students' research, Nov. 21, Winters College, Rm. 029A, 3:00 p.m.

## CALENDAR

Nov. 24-28, IDA Gallery, 202 Fine Arts Building.

**JERZY KOLACZ, THE MIND'S EYE**, paintings and drawings by the renowned Canadian editorial illustrator, Nov. 20-Dec. 19, Glendon Gallery.

**DOCUMENTARY AND DOCU-DRAMA**, photographs by Peter Barass and Jane Wilson, Nov. 20-Dec. 19, 123 Winters College.

## CALENDAR

**ANCIENT CULTURE OF PERU**, an exhibition of Indian ceramics from 1300 BC-1400 AD, Nov. 10-Dec. 20, AGYU, Ross N145.

**ANGELA LEIGH—COLOR WORK ON SILK AND TEXTILES**, Nov. 24-Dec. 5, Zacks Gallery, 109 Stong College.

**LARRY STREICHER, SANDRA ROBERTSON**, drawings by York students.

# Making the Merchant work

By KEVIN PASQUINO

**T**he *Merchant of Venice* is a difficult play to present, partially because of its alleged anti-Semitic subplot and partially because of its awkward blend of humour and drama. The fourth year theatre production of Shakespeare's classic confronted these difficulties and managed to turn them to their advantage.

The most obvious change made was updating the play from Shakespeare's era to Germany of 1932. The effects of this change in setting were two-fold: it made the classic seem more contemporary and relevant, and it allowed for modern reference.

The production included characters mimicking Groucho Marx and Charlie Chaplin, but the Princes of Morocco and Arragon (Maurice Wint and David Burgess) best exemplified the use of contemporary caricatures. Both actors drew upon images of clichéd film characters, the majestic foreign lover and the arrogant British nobleman, but still managed to make the characters seem realistic.

Unfortunately with this updating came the difficult problem of the relationship between Portia (Karen Inwood) and her servant Nerissa

(Janet Wilson). In the more contemporary setting this relationship became slightly blurred. It was unclear whether theirs was a mistress-servant relationship, or one of two childhood friends who might giggle over the men in their lives. This ambiguity made for a haziness in the story.

Even more difficult was the nature of the friendship between the main characters, Antonio and Bassanio. An essential part of the story is the fact these two men have a bond so powerful they are willing to die for one another. This rapport must be established in the very first scene, but unfortunately Sandy MacMaster (Antonio) and Maurice Wint (Bassanio) failed to convey these feelings.

The opening scene between Antonio and Bassanio should have flowed smoothly as these two old friends confide in one another, but instead seemed slow and choppy. Because of the lack of energy in this play's opening, for the rest of the evening the actors had to work twice as hard to reach the correct pace.

The arrival of Shylock, portrayed by Kirk Dunn, helped the production to achieve the standards it had set for itself. Dunn captured the character's pure villainy and hatred for all men. Only once did Shylock



**LAYING DOWN THE LAW:** An unbearded Shylock chastises his daughter, Jessica.

teeter on the edge of becoming a sympathetic character, but he never quite shed his true, vile colours.

In contrast to Shylock's villainy was the romantic relationship between Bassanio and Portia. The love these two characters shared was the sort of everlasting relationship that Bassanio should have established with Antonio.

The stage, in a galley style, was

used to good advantage in showing the tension and love between different characters. The full-length of the stage would be used to show hatred and mistrust, and when characters moved together to centre stage their warmth was quickly established.

The dramatic tension in the court scene, when Shylock demands his pound of flesh, was both the most effective and melodramatic part of the play. Melodramatic in that it blatantly drew parallels to the crucifixion of Christ (Antonio being held with his arms spread as if on a cross as Shylock approaches to take his life), but effective because the scene shows the depths of Shylock's villainy as well as the hatred the main characters have towards Shylock and all Jews.

After the play production was over and the actors had taken their bows, assistant director Zwia Rechler spoke to the audience about the historical significance of the play. Rechler invited the audience to question the morality of the "good men" in the play and the historical era in which Shakespeare lived.

The fourth year production of the play definitely forced the audience to question what it was seeing and what it thought of both the villain and the heroes of the play.

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