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The Merchant Of Venice



Synopsis

[Full-Cast Audio Theater Dramatization. Portia is played by Hadyn Gwynne and Shylock by Trevor Peacock. Julian Rhind-Tutt is Bassanio, and Bill Nighy is Antonio.] In Shakespeare's most controversial play, the opposing values of justice and mercy must be resolved. Antonio promises money to help his friend Bassanio woo Portia. He borrows the sum needed from the cruel Shylock, but there will be a dreadful penalty if the loan is not repaid. The golden world of Portia's Belmont calls forth some of Shakespeare's most lyrical love poetry. But the dark shadow of Shylock is never far from the heart of this brilliant comedy as it moves toward its courtroom climax in which the opposing values of justice and mercy must be resolved.

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Customer Reviews

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), English poet and dramatist of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean period, is the most widely known author in all of English literature and often considered the greatest. He was an active member of a theater company for at least twenty years, during which time he wrote many great plays. Plays were not prized as literature at the time, and Shakespeare was not widely read until the middle of the eighteenth century, when a great upsurge of interest in his works began that continues today.

Transforming any play into sound alone is a challenge, and one that is met by this Arkangel production of THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, part of its series of dramatized recordings of Shakespeare's works. Like many of Shakespeare's comedies, MERCHANT is at its core a love

story, but it is far more than that. The play is a controversial examination of justice, mercy, and prejudice. All the actors give strong performances, although it's somewhat difficult at times to distinguish between the voices of Bassanio and Antonio, played by Julian Rhind-Tutt and Bill Nighy. Trevor Peacock's portrayal of Shylock stands out among those of a solid cast. Peacock uses a sly voice for Shylock, saving his best for the comedy's climactic courtroom scene. D.J.S. © AudioFile 2005, Portland, Maine-- Copyright © AudioFile, Portland, Maine

We normally assign roles and read one or two Shakespeare plays aloud a year. Our family enjoys this way of reading his plays. But this year, our time commitment out of the home was not allowing me the time to make this happen. Cindy Rollins of the Ordo Amoris blog highly recommended the Arkangel recordings so I ordered. Am I glad I did! We have listened to other recordings and were not pleased with them. Usually, we could not understand everything being said because of poor elocution or speaking too fast. We have not had that problem at all and have loved the dramatic style of the reading actors. Launcelot, the comic relief, is our favorite. Well done! I grieved at the idea that we were dropping Mr. Shakespeare this year. Not so, and what a find in the midst of struggle.

As anyone who teaches Shakespeare knows, students often have a difficult time understanding the language of his plays. I have found that using audio versions of his plays in my classroom has really helped my students' comprehension. This is a great version of this play and my classes also got a kick out of the musical interludes.

If you are teaching Shakespeare and you want a good cd to liven up the readings in your class, this will work well. In fact, the entire series by this organization seems to be very good. I own Macbeth, MoV, and Hamlet, and all of them are very good. They are excellent supplements to our class readings.

I listened to this for the diction more than anything. I was expressly interested in the Shylock scenes as part of my research into the character. Most of the scenes are good with decent energy level, but in others I was disappointed. If you want the experience of the performance this doesn't have that for you. If you're more interested in how Shakespeare's English is sounded out, this is an excellent tool.

I had my 8th graders listen to this as we followed along in class. They found it VERY helpful to hear the emotions, pauses, and nuances of language. (side note: Lancelot Gobbo was fairly entertaining)

Excellent as always by this vendor. I had no issues with the reading or the actors interpretation. I recommend reading the play as always before listening to the play.

It is Shakespeare. The best.

An excellent production. The voice of Shylock was well executed. I would DEFINITELY recommend this to any Literature teacher or parent with a child who finds it difficult to read Shakespeare.

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