The Merchant of Venice
DURING THE PERFORMANCE

Masks stay on

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ASIDES
Production Program and Publication of the SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY

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Ginna Green
Dr. Drew Lichtenberg
Cristina Lopez

Publisher
Neal Racioppo

COVER PHOTO OF JOHN DOUGLAS THOMPSON BY HENRY GROSSMAN.
Welcome to The Merchant of Venice. We're thrilled to be sharing this superb interpretation by Arin Arbus in our second collaboration with our inspiring New York partner, Theatre for a New Audience.

I am equally delighted to share that STC's 2022/23 Season is now on sale! The coming season includes my much-anticipated production of Much Ado About Nothing, the immersive drama The Jungle, and so much more. As you will find out, we will be continuing to marry incredible
classic texts with exhilarating new approaches, building on the heroic successes of our current season.

Still to come later this season are Alan Paul’s exuberant reimagining of Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*, to be performed at Harman Hall in the round (a first!), and Jade King Carroll’s production of *Red Velvet* that explores the life of 19th century Shakespearean pioneer Ira Aldridge, another legendary Shylock.

Let the journey continue!

Simon Godwin  
Artistic Director  
Shakespeare Theatre Company
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For STC

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Staff

PRODUCTION SPONSORS:

KPMG

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This project is part of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest

RESTAURANT PARTNER:

Asia Nine Bar & Lounge

2021/22 SEASON SPONSORS:

Michael R. Klein and Joan Fabry
Harman Family Foundation
In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare coined the modern-day spelling of what common name?

*Find the answer on the last page!*
AUDIENCE SERVICES

Michael R. Klein Theatre at the Lansburgh
450 7th Street NW

Sidney Harman Hall
610 F Street NW

Tickets: 202.547.1122
Box Office phone hours:
   Daily, noon–6 p.m.

Box Office window open until curtain time.

Concessions and Gift Kiosks:
Food and beverages are available beginning one hour before performances and at intermission. Pre-order concessions before curtain to avoid lines at intermission. The gift kiosks are open before curtain, at intermission, and after each performance.
Accessibility

Our theatres are accessible to all patrons. Please request special seating at time of ticket purchase and arrive 30 minutes before curtain for priority seating.

Open-captioned performances of this play:

**Saturday, April 2**
*at 2:00 p.m.*

**Thursday, April 7**
*at 7:30 p.m.*

Audio-described version of this play:

**Saturday, April 16**
*at 2:00 p.m.*

An audio-enhancement system is available for all performances. Both headset receivers and neck loops (to use with hearing aids outfitted with a “T” switch) are available at the coat check on a first-come basis.
Support for Shakespeare Theatre Company’s Accessibility program provided by mps.

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Shakespeare Theatre Company operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States, and employs members of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and United Scenic Artists. The Company is a member of the Performing Arts Alliance, the D.C. Chamber of Commerce, Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP), American Alliance for Theatre and Education, and D.C. Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative.
Pre-order your snacks, drinks, and gifts by clicking here.

ORDER NOW

Note: This service is unavailable once the show begins.

Pick-up concessions at the bar pre-show or at intermission.

Gift items can be picked up before or after the show and at intermission.
The Merchant of Venice

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Arin Arbus

Performances begin March 22, 2022
Opening Night March 25, 2022
The Michael R. Klein Theatre at the Lansburgh
Pre-Theatre Menu, Sushi, Thai, Vietnamese, and more

**Happy Hour**
Monday–Saturday
4 p.m.–7 p.m.

915 E Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20004
301-330-9997
CAST

Portia........................................Isabel Arraiza*
Prince of Arragon................Varín Ayala*
Nerissa.................................Shirine Babb*
Balthazar...............................Jeff Biehl*
Bassanio.................................Sanjit De Silva*
Jessica....................................Danaya Esperanza*
Solanio...................................Yonatan Gebeyehu*
Lorenzo..................................David Lee Huynh*
Prince of Morocco/
Duke/Tubal............................Maurice Jones*
Launcelot Gobbo......................Nate Miller*
Antonio....................................Alfredo Narciso*
Gratiano..................................Haynes Thigpen*
Shylock...................................John Douglas Thompson*
Salerio...................................Graham Winton*

Fight Captain: David Lee Huynh*

UNDERSTUDIES:
Saron Araia+ (Nerissa), Claire Blackwelder+ (Portia),
Josh Decker+ (Bassanio, Gratiano), Bowen Fox+ 
(Salerio), Brandon Haagensen+ (Solanio), Jonathan 
Jacobs+ (Balthazar), Kiana Johnson+ (Jessica), Quinn 
M. Johnson+ (Lorenzo), James Carlos Lacy+ (Prince 
of Arragon), Ryan Neely+ (Antonio), Erik Sorensen+ 
(Launcelot Gobbo), Travis Xavier+ (Prince of Morocco/
Duke/Tubal)

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, 
the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.
+Member of the Shakespeare Theatre Company Academy for 
Classical Acting at The George Washington University, Class of 2022.
FOR THIS PRODUCTION
Assistant Scenic Designer: Jungah Han
Assistant Lighting Designer: Jackie Fox
Assistant Sound Designer: Jamie Tippett
Dialect Coach: Dwight Bacquie
Liturgical Consultant: Jerry Raik
Fight Consultant: J. Allen Suddeth
TFANA Properties Supervisor: Jon Knust
Production Assistant: Regina Vitale
Overhire Carpenters: Jeff Campbell, Ben French, Matt Reid, Luke Tudball

SHOW CREW
Wardrobe: Daisy Howard (Supervisor), Alexandra Beverina, Andrew Michael Reilly
Wardrobe Prep/Swing: Jules Capuco
Wigs: Margaret Sackman
Light Board Programmer/Operator: Peter Goldschmidt
Audio Engineer: Travis Byrne
Deck Crew: Andrew Wilkinson (Deck Chief), Elizabeth Burch (swing), Christian Campbell, Craig Gatling, Will Maresco (Swing)

COVID-19 SAFETY COMMITTEE
Tom Haygood, Tim Fowler, Douglas Dubois Sebamala, Julane Havens, Janice Jenson, Joy Johnson, Lindsey Morris, Max Schwager, Abigail Winston
COVID-19 Safety Managers: Hue Adams, Steven Breiter, Douglas Dubois Sebamala, Jen Jacobs, Janice Jenson, Joy Johnson, Hilary Surface

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For additional members of the production staff, please see the full staff listing.
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The Merchant of Venice, often labeled by scholars as a “problem play,” is a tragedy. Yes, the dramatic structure of the piece aligns more cleanly with Shakespeare’s comedies, but the message of the piece is, ultimately, tragic. Shylock lives in a Venice scarred with antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, classism, and misogyny. Living openly as Jewish, Shylock is constantly reminded of his otherness, his proposed inferiority to the majority, and the threat of his existence to the rest of the community. While the barbs thrown at him may have been considered comical 400 years ago, they are sickening reminders of the way so many Jews have been (and still are) treated throughout the world.

What the characters don’t understand is that Judaism is more than a
religion; it is a culture, a race, an ethnicity, and a nationality. As Yair Rosenberg writes for a recent piece in Deep Shtetl, Judaism is a blending of identities that “doesn’t conform to Western categories, despite centuries of attempts by society to shoehorn it in” (much like the structure of The Merchant of Venice itself). Unfortunately, as we have no doubt learned from distant and recent history, there is a part of the population that hates what they do not understand. By refusing to play by the rules of simple definitions, Judaism is sometimes seen as a threat—it defies definition, and that defiance is terrifying to those who do not wish to understand the complex, intersectional identities encapsulated in being Jewish.

To present this play in our modern moment is a double-edged sword. A production’s success lies within
the telling of the story itself—in the actors and the creative team doing the hard work behind the scenes to shape the way audiences understand, critique, and connect with the necessary conversations happening on the stage. In this play, Shakespeare painfully creates a world of hypocrisy, assumptions, and judgment—a world where no characters are intrinsically good (even if they believe that they are). Between the jokes at the expense of the outsiders and the speeches on piety and faith, the audience is forced to bear witness as characters twist words like knives to serve their own selfish needs and prejudiced beliefs. There is no justice in this play, and there is certainly no true peace either. Despite Shylock’s famous final lines, it is highly doubtful that he is truly “content” with the way he has been treated—and we shouldn’t be either.
SYNOPSIS

Bassanio, a sly player aiming to woo the heiress Portia, is low on funds. He turns to his friend, the titular merchant Antonio, for a loan but Antonio’s money is tied up in ships currently at sea. Wanting to help Bassanio, Antonio approaches Shylock, a Jewish moneylender, for a loan. Withstanding Antonio’s antisemitic comments, Shylock agrees to the loan on one condition: if Antonio cannot pay his debt, Shylock may cut “a pound of flesh” from him as his bond.

A second plot surrounds Portia of Belmont. Upon her father’s passing, he decreed that she must marry the man who chooses from three caskets the one containing her picture. When her first two suitors fail this test, Bassanio enters and is pointed toward the correct casket—effectively winning her hand. Meanwhile, his friend Lorenzo elopes with Shylock’s daughter, Jessica.
Antonio’s fortune fails when two of his ships are wrecked at sea and his loan comes due. Bassanio rushes back to Venice when he hears that Shylock plans to hold true to his bargain, seeking revenge on the Christians that have mocked him and stolen Jessica away. Portia arrives in Venice as well, disguised as a young lawyer ready to defend Antonio in court. Shylock is denied his suit and Portia orders him to forfeit his wealth as punishment for conspiring to murder a Venetian citizen—half going to Venice and half to Antonio. Antonio gives his half back to Shylock under two conditions: first, the money must be bequeathed to his disinherited daughter, Jessica. Second, Shylock must convert to Christianity. Broken beyond words, Shylock accepts his fate. Back in Belmont, the couples reunite and Portia reveals that she was the lawyer all along.
Bravo!

KPMG is proud to support the Shakespeare Theatre company. We recognize *The Merchant of Venice* cast and creative team for their commitment to diversity and inclusion in the celebration of art.

kpmg.com/us
ABOUT SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY

OUR MISSION
Shakespeare Theatre Company creates, preserves, and promotes classic theatre—ambitious, enduring plays with universal themes—for all audiences.

OUR VISION
We create theatre to ignite a dialogue that connects the universality of classic works to our shared human experience in the modern world.

OUR VALUES AND FOCUS
Shakespeare Theatre Company produces and presents the highest quality classic theatre productions across genres, bringing them to vibrant life in a provocative, imaginative, and accessible style.

With Shakespeare at our core, we explore plays of national and international relevancy—those with profound themes, complex characters, and heightened language—through a contemporary 21st-century lens.
We expand the classic theatre repertoire in America by reviving and commissioning adaptations and translations of important forgotten works.

We create impactful and responsive arts education and community engagement programs to connect audiences to the significance of classic works and themes. We provide a home for leading classical artists and a training ground for the next generation of theatre artists and arts administrators.

Shakespeare Theatre Company is honored to welcome everybody to our theatre, which sits on the unceded homeland of the Nacotchtank, Piscataway Conoy, and Pamunkey peoples and their descendants. It is our hope that in gathering together communities from near and far to engage in art and storytelling, we are doing so responsibly, with respect and recognition of Indigenous people and First Nation members and elders who are with us, and of all the Native peoples for whom D.C. is their ancestral home.
Ushers play an integral role in making sure that every audience member who comes through our doors has a positive and joyful experience.

STC celebrates the lives of our ushers who have passed since the start of the shutdown. One such usher was Alice Chang, who generously dedicated her time as a volunteer usher at STC. She loved the theatre and went above and beyond to support the arts in D.C. Alice, and all our dear ushers who have passed, will always be a part of the STC family.
A BONE IN THE THROAT

BY DR. DREW LICHTENBERG, RESIDENT DRAMATURG
Perhaps no play of Shakespeare’s induces more pronounced feelings of anxiety for modern audiences than *The Merchant of Venice*.

Theatre artists seem to agree. Dame Judi Dench, who played Portia in 1970, would later say, “I loathe the play. I think it is terrible, everyone behaves frightfully badly. Who cares about anybody in it?” In the program for his 1989 production, starring Dustin Hoffman as Shylock, Sir Peter Hall writes, “If you look at this play with a clear eye, you’ll see that it’s written for a prejudiced audience, and it warns them of the danger of prejudice. And I think it still does.” More than 20 years later, reviewing Al Pacino’s 2010
performance as Shylock, scholar Stephen Greenblatt summed up this history of unease, describing the play as “a bone caught in the throat that can be neither coughed up nor comfortably swallowed.”

This unease derives partly from the familiar Shakespearean tension between representation and
representativeness, that is, the tendency of audiences to interpret an individual character’s behavior as standing in for a broader social type. Shylock and Tubal are the only male Jewish characters in the Shakespearean canon, and Jessica is just one of two Jewish women in all of English drama from the 1580s until 1642. Their every word and gesture are subject to intense scrutiny.

In particular, the courtroom image of Shylock with a knife, demanding his pound of flesh, supports an explicitly antisemitic tradition fashioning Jews as revenge-seeking, Christian-hating, and bloodthirsty, one that continues to this day. At the same time, Shylock’s speech in the scene immediately before the trial casts him as a victim of prejudice, of anti-Judaism. When taken out of its original dramatic context, it is one of
Shakespeare’s most famous cries for human rights and specifically Jewish dignity. Far from resolving the play’s ambiguities, these two opposing and overlapping ways of viewing Shylock only intensify them.

By order of Parliament, Edward I expelled the Jews of England in 1290, and they were only welcomed back officially after Shakespeare’s death. But many scholars since have argued that small but significant communities existed in London, and that Shakespeare’s depiction is sufficiently distinct that it must be informed by direct observation of some kind. In 1589, Rodrigo Lopez, a Jewish Portuguese doctor in Queen Elizabeth’s court, was accused of attempting to murder the queen and summarily executed, without full protection of the law. *The Merchant of Venice* was written about six
years later. Much as *Othello* would be written shortly after a Moroccan ambassador visited Elizabeth's court in 1600, it is not difficult to imagine Shakespeare drawing on the tragic case of Lopez for inspiration. Both plays are set in Venice, and both depict social outsiders, scapegoated by an intolerant society.
Remarkably, just as *The Merchant of Venice* discomforts audiences and actors, it also dramatizes this anxiety in its other plot, which shows the Venetian characters attempting to reconcile their individual identities with the social roles expected of them. This is a play that opens with its *non-Jewish characters* complaining of a strange and inexplicable melancholy, one not easily allayed or even described. “In sooth, I know not why I am so sad,” Antonio, the merchant of Venice, says to his companions. And Portia, the wealthy heiress of Belmont, says in the following scene: “By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.”

Both Antonio and Portia are enamored of Bassanio, a handsome Venetian youth who has already lost one inheritance and gambled away
another. This romantic plot drives the action, intersecting fatefuly with Shylock’s household. Antonio will loan Bassanio all the money he has, borrowing from Shylock to do so. And Portia, in her desire to help the friend of the man she loves, leaves the wealth and comfort of Belmont behind for Venice, disguised as a man. In other words, Antonio and Portia’s free-floating, unresolved desires cut across traditional roles of gender and sexuality. More than merely serving as the play’s plot engine, they serve as a kind of dramaturgical mirror, reflecting upon the ambiguities of individual and social identity that are Shakespeare’s larger subject in the play. In search of something they cannot define, trying to establish a state of equilibrium they never completely attain, Antonio and Portia’s insecurities are highlighted in their clash with Shylock, who,
whatever his faults, remains unshakable in his own identity and a clear-sighted critic of Venetian hypocrisy. As Shylock says to the Duke of Venice, why should he show human mercy when Venice itself, a world in which everything is potentially for sale, shows none?

You have among you many a purchased slave, Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules, You use in abject and in slavish parts, Because you bought them: shall I say to you, Let them be free, marry them to your heirs? (4.1.89–93)

The Duke has no good answer to this, and Shylock’s keen perception of this double standard may begin to explain why many actors have performed the role as a proud avatar of ethnic and racial difference, from the Black American actor Ira Aldridge in the 19th century to Jacob Adler at the turn of the 20th century, who performed the role entirely in his native Yiddish.
In Shakespeare’s text, Shylock is forcibly denied the recognition he seeks on his own terms, and he exits at the end of Act 4, never to return. His daughter, Jessica, opts for a different approach, eloping with the Christian Lorenzo in a mysterious and open-ended allegory of Jewish assimilation. In the final act, which takes place entirely in Belmont,
Lorenzo compares his and Jessica’s love to classical models: Troilus and Cressida, Pyramus and Thisbe, Dido and Aeneas, speaking some of Shakespeare’s most beautiful poetry. But Lorenzo is no Romeo, Jessica is no Juliet, and Belmont, though glittering and golden, is no enchanted green world. The feeling of melancholy with which the play began has scarcely dissipated. Shylock’s words—a bone in the throat—are still ringing in our ears.
Nathan the Wise
By Gotthold Ephraim Lessing
Adapted by Michael Bloom

Produced in Association with Folger Theatre

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DO WE KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?

BY GINNA GREEN
n Election Day 2016, my eldest son and I went canvassing in Charlotte, North Carolina. Isaac and I had schlepped up from South Carolina after I had cast my own ballot at 7 a.m. with him and his younger siblings in tow. We knocked doors and talked to voters until sundown, and it was clear to me well before we left the Tarheel State that our world was about to change.

At the time, Isaac was in eighth grade and loved studying Jewish text and Jewish law, in addition to math and science. We were investigating Jewish high schools in cities across the country, looking at Atlanta, Chicago, Memphis, and New York for the site of the next major chapter in his life. Before he closed his eyes on election night, however, I would crush his dreams. In the new era ahead of us, I could not—would not—send my queer,
Black, Orthodox son, with a kippah (yarmulke/skullcap head covering) and tzitzit (ritual fringes), out into a world where his particular identities would make him even less safe than he already was. It was a decision I don’t even remember making, just the telling.

More crushing than even my decision was that Isaac immediately understood, knowingly boxing up his hopes for another day and time, accepting the new reality with an ease that both comforted and disturbed me.

Even in his youth, he knew what time it was.

During the final months of 2019, following years of rising antisemitism, deadly attacks on Jews in the greater New York area reached a disturbing flashpoint with violence in Monsey, Brooklyn, and Jersey City.
These attacks, perpetrated by Black assailants, galvanized Jews and our allies in solidarity, but simultaneously presented an opportunity for people who see Black folks and Jews (and can barely comprehend us being both) as the enemy.

For Black Jews, oppression is intertwined in our individual lives, but equally important is how it is connected in our social system. Eric Ward of the Western States Center painstakingly laid out the connections between antisemitism, racism, and white nationalism in 2017 in his piece “Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism,” ultimately asserting that “[t]he White nationalist movement that evolved from [white supremacism] in the 1970s...positions Jews as the absolute other, the driving force of white dispossession—which means the other channels of its hatred cannot be
intercepted without directly taking on antisemitism.”

Jews of color, then, particularly Black Jews, live this American life of precarity both at the intersections and in the margins. We feel the sting of antisemitism when folks pepper their speech with antisemitic slurs and invoke antisemitic tropes, unaware that they’re speaking to someone Jewish. We feel the pain of racism in Jewish spaces, when white Jews trip over themselves and their words interrogating our Jewishness. And we feel the discomfort of both at the same time when Black folks like Whoopi Goldberg don’t get a pass on their Jewish history knowledge but others in places of authority escape scrutiny. And despite the fact that if anyone is equipped to speak credibly about the intersection of antisemitism and racism in the United States, it’s Black Jews, we are often absent from
these discussions both in the Jewish community and outside of it.

Some of us still don’t know what time it is.

*The Merchant of Venice* is as complex as America itself, and there could be no better time than now to address the persistent themes Shylock and Portia, Antonio and Jessica uncomfortably lay bare.

Shylock never gets his redemption. Will we?

---

Ginna Green is Partner and Chief Strategy Officer at Uprise, and has called South Carolina, Hawaii, California, Connecticut, and Washington, D.C., her homes. She sits on the boards of the Jews of Color Initiative, Jewish Story Partners, and the Jewish Social Justice Roundtable, and is President of the Women’s March Win PAC. Ginna is co-host of A Bintel Brief podcast and a Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America’s Kogod Research Center.
CAST BIOGRAPHIES

ISABEL ARRAIZA*

*Portia


VARÍN AYALA*

*Prince of Arragon

SHIRINE BABB*

Nerissa


JEFF BIEHL*

Balthazar

SANJIT DE SILVA*

Bassanio


DANAYA ESPERANZA*

Jessica

YONATAN GEBEYEHU*

Solanio

STC: *Timon of Athens, Everybody.*

DAVID LEE HUYNH*

Lorenzo

MAURICE JONES*
Prince of Morocco/Duke/Tubal

NATE MILLER*
Launcelot Gobbo
ALFREDO NARCISO*

Antonio

NEW YORK: Broadway: *Time and the Conways*. Off-Broadway: *Measure for Measure, Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow.*


HAYNES THIGPEN*

Gratiano

John Douglas Thompson*

Shylock

**NEW YORK:** Broadway: Jitney (Tony Award nomination), Carousel, A Time to Kill, Julius Caesar. Off-Broadway: The Father, A Doll’s House, Tamburlaine, Macbeth, Othello (Obie Award, Drama Desk Award, Lucille Lortel Award, AUDELCO Award), Julius Caesar, The Iceman Cometh (Obie Award, Drama Desk Award), Satchmo at the Waldorf (Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award, NAACP Award), The Emperor Jones (Drama League Award nomination, Drama Desk Award nomination), Hedda Gabler. REGIONAL: Commonwealth Shakespeare Company: The Tempest | Huntington Theatre Company: Man in the Ring (Elliot Norton Award) | Mark Taper Forum: Joe Turner’s Come and Gone | Hartford Stage: Antony and Cleopatra | Shakespeare & Company: Red Velvet, Othello, Richard III. FILM: 355, The Letter Room, 21 Bridges, Let Them All Talk. TELEVISION: The Gilded Age, Mare of Easttown, For Life.
GRAHAM WINTON*

Salerio


*Members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.
I live in the District & Love it!

Judi Seiden
202.547.4419
judi@judiseiden.com
ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHIES

ARIN ARBUS
Director
NEW YORK: Broadway: Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune (Tony Award nomination, Best Revival of a Play). Off-Broadway: The Winter’s Tale, The Skin of Our Teeth (Obie Award), The Father, A Doll’s House, King Lear, Much Ado About Nothing, The Taming of the Shrew, Macbeth, Measure for Measure, Othello. OTHER: Arbus spent several years making theatre with prisoners in association with Rehabilitation Through the Arts and in 2018, she directed an adaptation of The Tempest in a refugee camp in Greece for The Campfire Project.

RICCARDO HERNANDEZ
Scenic Designer
NEW YORK: Broadway: Jagged Little Pill (Tony Award nomination); Indecent; The Gin Game; Porgy and Bess; The People in the Picture; Parade (Tony Award nomination, Drama Desk Award nomination); Bring in ‘da Noise, Bring in ‘da Funk; The Tempest. Off-Broadway: The Invisible Hand (Henry Hewes Design Award), Red Speedo (Drama Desk Award nomination), Grounded. OTHER: National Theatre London: Caroline, or Change | Old Vic: Elaine Stritch: At Liberty | Royal Court: Topdog/Underdog | Théâtre du Châtelet, Avignon
EMILY REBHOLZ
Costume Designer

STC: Othello. NEW YORK: Broadway: Jagged Little Pill (Tony Award nomination); Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune; Getting the Band Back Together; Indecent; Oh, Hello on Broadway; If/Then; Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike; Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson. Off-Broadway: Nantucket Sleigh Ride, The Low Road (Henry Hewes Design Award, Lucille Lortel Award nomination), The Winter’s Tale, Mary Jane, Twelfth Night, Brigadoon, The Robber Bridegroom. REGIONAL: Santa Fe Opera: Lammermoor, Don Giovanni | Opera Theatre of St. Louis: Orfeo ed Euridice. PERSONAL: Training: Yale University: MFA.

MARCUS DOSHI
Lighting Designer

designed internationally in 18 countries across five continents. He is Associate Chair of the Department of Theatre at Northwestern University, where he teaches design. | MarcusDoshi.com.

JUSTIN ELLINGTON
Original Music and Sound Design
NEW YORK: Broadway: Pass Over, Clyde’s, Other Desert Cities. Off-Broadway: He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box; The Winter’s Tale; Heroes of the Fourth Turning; The Rolling Stone; Pass Over; Pipeline; Mrs. Murray’s Menagerie; The House That Will Not Stand; Fetch Clay, Make Man.

TOMMY KURZMAN
Hair/Wig/Makeup Designer
JAMES SHAPIRO
Consulting Scholar
James is the author of *Shakespeare and the Jews*, *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599*, *Contested Will*, *The Year of Lear*, and *Shakespeare in a Divided America* (one of *The New York Times*’ ten best books of 2020). AWARDS: Guggenheim, Cullman, and NEH fellowships. PERSONAL: James was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and serves as a governor of the Royal Shakespeare Company. He is a Larry Miller Professor of English at Columbia University.

AYANNA THOMPSON
Consulting Scholar
Ayanna is the author of *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race* (editor); *Blackface; Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America*; and *Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage*. PERSONAL: Ayanna is a Regents Professor of English at Arizona State University and the director of the Arizona Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies (ACMRS). She is a Shakespeare Scholar in Residence at The Public Theater. She is on the boards of Royal Shakespeare Company, Folger Shakespeare Library, National Parks Arts Foundation, and Play On Shakespeare. She also served as the president of the Shakespeare Association of America.
ANDREW WADE
Voice Director


JACOB ETTKIN
Assistant Director


MAX J. KELLY
Assistant Director

SHANE SCHNETZLER*
Production Stage Manager
NEW YORK: Off-Broadway: Soho Repertory Theatre: Fairview | Timon of Athens, Julius Caesar, The Emperor, He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Tamburlaine, Fiasco's
Cymbeline, Seven Deadly Sins, Noura, This Flat Earth, The Profane, Rancho Viejo, Familiar, Napoli, Brooklyn, Look Back in Anger, The Taming of the Shrew, King Lear, The Comedy of Errors, Detroit ’67, Night is a Room, The Liquid Plain, The Old Friends.

KURT HALL*
Stage Manager

STC: Romeo and Juliet (2018 Free For All), Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Five by Tenn, Hamlet.

ALISON R. SIMONE*
Assistant Stage Manager

she/her/hers | Training: Columbia University: MFA in Stage Management | Instagram: @alisonrsimone.

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.

The Director is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.

The designers at this theatre are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.
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**EPILOGUE**

Things to read, watch, and listen to next!

**READ**

**Shylock Is My Name** (2016)

Howard Jacobson’s novel offers a sympathetic rendering of Shakespeare’s most famous Jewish character. Stuck in a state of depression after his daughter runs away, Shylock meets Strulovitch, a Jewish art dealer. Both men realize they have a lot in common, despite their differing relationships with their religion. What forms from their discussions is a touching examination on what it means to be Jewish.

“Four Hundred Years Later, Scholars Still Debate Whether Shakespeare’s ‘Merchant of Venice’ Is Anti-Semitic” (2016)

In this article for *Smithsonian Magazine*, Brandon Ambrosino deconstructs the polarizing subject matter behind *The Merchant of Venice*. With detailed observations on all sides of the debate, the article provides historical context on the history of the play. Link [here](#).
“Beyond the Count: Perspectives and Lived Experiences of Jews of Color” (2022)

A crucial research project commissioned by the Jews of Color Initiative, this extensive and enlightening survey presents an intersectional account of American Jewish life by exploring how ethnic, racial, and cultural identities influence the religious experiences of Jews of Color. Link here.

WATCH

Legally Blonde (2001)

“What, like it’s hard?” In this quintessentially feminist film, sorority girl Elle Woods defies expectations by getting into Harvard Law School. Taking a page out of Portia’s book, Elle dons her best lawyer outfit to win a high-profile murder case, thus proving that girls can be smart and still have pink as their signature color.

How to Get Away with Murder (2014–2020)

This legal thriller follows law professor
and lawyer Annalise Keating. Just like Portia, Keating wins her cases and clears her name on technicalities by referring to exact details of the language of the law. This television show is produced by Emmy Award-nominated producer Shonda Rhimes and stars Academy, Emmy, and Tony Award-winning actress Viola Davis as Annalise Keating.

**Fiddler on the Roof** (1971)
This beloved musical follows the life of Jewish milkman Tevye as he faces the challenging task of marrying off his five daughters. A lover of tradition, Tevye struggles as his daughters fight for the right to choose their own paths. Mirroring Shylock and his daughter Jessica, the fight between tradition and autonomy comes to a head when his daughter Chava chooses to marry a non-Jewish man.

**The Merchant of Venice** (opera)
This opera, based on Shakespeare’s original text, features music by Polish composer
André Tchaikowsky and a libretto by John O’Brien. Written between 1968 and 1982, the piece did not debut until 2013 at the Bregenz Festival in Austria. Listen here.

Tsvey Brider (“Two Brothers”)
Identifying as Black, gay, and Jewish, Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell is a professional singer of both European opera and traditional Yiddish music. In 2017, Anthony joined with pianist/accordionist Dmitri Gaskin to create the music duo Tsvey Brider. Combining and contrasting diverse idioms, styles, and periods, their music creates contemporary, idiosyncratic music entirely in the Yiddish language. Listen here.
UP NEXT:

**Our Town**

By THORNTON WILDER

Directed by ALAN PAUL

MAY 12–JUNE 11

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JALEO
Our highly anticipated production of Thornton Wilder’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play Our Town will grace the first-ever in-the-round use of the stage at Sidney Harman Hall. STC’s Associate Artistic Director Alan Paul directs a cast of local performers, all of whom call D.C. home. This hauntingly beautiful tale strips the need for exuberant pomp and circumstance and focuses instead on the relationships cultivated by each character on the stage. Narrated by a character known only as “The Stage Manager,” it tells the small-town story of the inhabitants of Grover’s Corners.

In a time when the world has felt so disconnected, Our Town reminds us of the importance of community and how vital it is to be present. The world around us may change, but we are all connected from generation to generation by the memories of the places and people that shaped who we are.
Simon Godwin joined STC as Artistic Director in 2019. He has served as Associate Director of the National Theatre of London, the Royal Court Theatre, the Bristol Old Vic, and the Royal and Derngate Theatres (Northampton). While at the Royal Court, Simon directed seven world premieres, including *Routes*, *If You Don’t Let Us Dream*, *We Won’t Let You Sleep*, *NSFW*, *The Witness*, *Goodbye to All That*, *The Acid Test*, and *Wanderlust*. He made his debut at the National Theatre with *Strange Interlude* followed by *Man and Superman*, and went on to direct *The Beaux’ Stratagem*, *Twelfth Night*, a celebrated production of *Antony and Cleopatra* with Ralph Fiennes and Sophie Okonedo, and the world premiere of Simon Wood’s *Hansard*. Most recently, he returned to the National Theatre to direct *Romeo & Juliet*, an original film for television (Sky Arts in UK/PBS in US) starring Josh O’Connor and Jessie Buckley. Simon has also directed at the Royal Shakespeare Company, including productions of *Timon of Athens* with Kathryn Hunter in the titular role, which was reimagined in early 2020 for Theatre for a New Audience in New York City and STC, an acclaimed *Hamlet*, which toured to the
Kennedy Center, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In 2019, Simon made his Tokyo debut, directing a Japanese cast in *Hamlet* for Theatre Cocoon. Other productions include *The Little Mermaid, Krapp’s Last Tape/A Kind of Alaska, Faith Healer, Far Away, Everyman, Habeas Corpus, and Relatively Speaking*. In 2012 Simon was awarded the inaugural Evening Standard/Burberry Award for an Emerging Director.

CHRIS JENNINGS  
*Executive Director*  
STC: Joined the Company in 2004. ADMINISTRATION:  
General Manager: Trinity Repertory Company (1999–2004), Theatre for a New Audience (1997–1999); Associate Managing Director: Yale Repertory Theatre; Assistant to the Executive Producer: Manhattan Theater Club; Founder/Producing Director: Texas Young Playwrights Festival; Manager: Dougherty Arts Center. MEMBERSHIPS: Currently serves on the Board of the DowntownDC BID, THE ARC, the Penn Quarter Neighborhood Association, theatreWashington, and is a member of the League of Resident Theatres (served on AEA and SSDC Negotiating Committees); has served as a panelist for the NEA, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, and Pew Theatre Initiative. AWARDS: Arts Administration Fellowship: National

ALAN PAUL
Associate Artistic Director

STC: *All the Devils Are Here; Peter Pan and Wendy; The Comedy of Errors* (Helen Hayes Award nomination, Best Director); *Romeo and Juliet* (mainstage and 2018 Free For All); *Camelot; Kiss Me, Kate; Man of La Mancha* (Helen Hayes Award nomination, Best Director); *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Helen Hayes Award, Best Director); *The Boys from Syracuse; The Winter’s Tale* (2014 Free For All); *Twelfth Night* (2010 Free For All); *As You Like It* (Associate Director); *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2* (Associate Director); numerous galas, readings, and special events; Assistant Director: 13 shows. THEATRE DIRECTING: 5th Avenue Theatre: *Kiss Me, Kate* | Arena Stage: *The Pajama Game* | Signature Theatre: *I Am My Own Wife* | Studio Theatre 2ndStage: *Silence! The Musical* (Helen Hayes Award nomination, Best Director), *The Rocky Horror Show* | MetroStage: *Fully Committed* | University of Maryland: *The Matchmaker* | Apex Theatre Company: *Richard II*. OPERA DIRECTING: Palm Beach Opera: *The Pirates of Penzance* (with Stephanie Blythe) | Portland Opera: *Man of La Mancha* | Washington National Opera: *Penny* (World Premiere) | numerous works for Urban Arias, The In
Series, Strathmore Concert Hall, Wolf Trap Opera, and the National Symphony Orchestra. PERSONAL: Finalist for the 2013 European Opera Directing Prize (Vienna, Austria) | AlanPaulDirector.com.

LEEANÉT NOBLE

Director of Equity and Enrichment

STC: Director: Amen Baldwin!: A Living Celebration. Writer/Producer: Shakespeare Everywhere; Our Town, Our Shakespeare. NEW YORK: Off-Broadway: STOMP, Drumstruck, House of Charlie, and one-woman shows KickN2theBeat and In My Shoes. FILM: Director: 10 Seconds. Actor: Downtown Express. PERSONAL: LeeAnét has worked with Bono, Alicia Keys, Rihanna, Sheryl Crow, and more. She is the co-director of the internationally, critically acclaimed dance troupe, Team Vicious. Her original productions have been seen at The Kennedy Center, Madison Square Garden, 54 Below, The Zipper Theatre, and The Stade de Bercy (Paris). She was featured in and on the development team for the digital series Disney’s The Lion King Experience. Her play, Lerato and Her Drum, was a recent finalist for TYA/USA and Write Now’s RelImagine: New Plays in TYA program | Teaching: The Academy for Classical Acting at The George Washington University, Howard University, Montgomery College | Training: Howard University | Instagram: @leeanetnoble | LeeAnet.com.
DR. DREW LICHTENBERG

Resident Dramaturg

As Resident Dramaturg for the last decade, Drew has worked on more than 50 productions, including numerous world premieres, and over half of the 36-play Shakespeare canon. He has worked as a production dramaturg abroad at the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain (twice), in New York on Broadway at the Roundabout Theatre Company, and off, with the New York Shakespeare Festival. Regionally, he has worked with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Play On!), Yale Repertory Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, and Williamstown Theatre Festival. His dramaturgical writing has appeared at theatres such as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the McCarter Theatre Center at Princeton University, and American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. As a translator and adaptor, he has worked off-off-Broadway at La Mama Experimental Theatre Club and locally at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. He is currently an adjunct professor at Catholic University of America, formerly a part-time faculty member at Eugene Lang College at the New School, and will be a Lecturer at David Geffen School of Drama at Yale University in Spring of 2022. He has received an MFA and DFA in dramaturgy and dramatic criticism from Yale School of Drama and is the author of the scholarly monograph, *The Piscatorbühne Century: Aesthetics and Politics in the Theater after*
1927 (New York & London: Routledge, 2021). He is the co-host of STC’s *Shakespeare Hour Live*.

**DANICA RODRIGUEZ**  
*Resident Casting Director*  

**LISA BELEY**  
*Head of Voice and Text*  
STC: *Peter Pan and Wendy; Everybody; The Oresteia; Vanity Fair; Richard III; The Panties, The Partner and The Profit; The Comedy of Errors; Romeo and Juliet; Camelot; Noura; Hamlet; Twelfth Night; The Lover and The Collection; Othello* (2017 Free For All); *The School for Lies;*
Macbeth; King Charles III | ACA: As You Like It, Measure for Measure, Macbeth, Pericles, Julius Caesar, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Coriolanus.
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In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare coined the modern-day spelling of what common name?

A: Jessica.

Common variations of the name in print include Iessica, Jesica, Jesika, Jessicah, Jessika, and Jessikah.