

[Vpstart Crow *The Merchant of Venice*](#)

October 12th, 2007

Listen to Mike's [thoughts of Vpstart Crow's production of *The Merchant of Venice*](#) [MP3 3:31 1.6MB].

Mike: This is the ShowBizRadio.net review of [Vpstart Crow's](#) production of [The Merchant of Venice](#) in Manassas, Virginia. I saw the show on Sunday afternoon, October 7, 2007.



George Kitchen as Antonio (left) and Jay Tilley as Shylock This was a very good piece. It was a Shakespeare so you did have the language and there were a handful of scenes where I had no idea what was going on, including the opening scene. One thing that was unique about this production was the costumes and the set took place post World War I. It was the flapper era. All the men were dressed up as gangsters and the women were dressed up as

flappers. That was a nice touch. I liked the set design. It was very simple. The show flowed along for the most part.

Merchant of Venice is a William Shakespeare play. Sometimes classified as a comedy and sometimes a drama. It's perhaps most remembered for it's dramatic scenes such as the trial scene at the end. It is best known for it's portrayal of the Jew Shylock which has raised questions of anti-semitism.

Overall I did enjoy the show. Vpstart Crow handled a multitude of scenes very smoothly. They didn't even use blackouts between the scenes. They just flowed from one to the other. There were multiple areas set up on the stage and on the floor in front of the stage at the audience level. The performers move up and down between the different levels and areas very smoothly.

I really liked over all the entire creative design of the show. The set was designed by **Thomas Hannon**. Lighting was designed by **William MacLeod**. Costumes were designed by **Stephanie Powlen**. I think all thes things worked together very nicely.

The actors did a pretty good job as well. Antonio, played by **George Kitchen**, was the main character. He was the Merchant of Venice. He borrowed some money from the Jewish money lender, Shylock.

Shylock was played by **Jay Tilley**. He had this debonair air about him, but at the same time he was kind of menacing. He was very determined and in charge of his own destiny. He was so pleased when he was able to get the pound of flesh from Antonio. That trial scene worked really well.



Rachel Lee Poole as Portia (left) and Pamela Sabella as Nerissa I also like the scenes between Portia and Nerissa. Portia was played by **Rachel Lee Poole**. Nerissa was played by **Pamela Sabella**. They had a relationship of teasing the men and putting the men in their place. They worked very well together.

Bassanio was played by **Christopher C. Holbert**. He was trying to gain Portia's hand. He made a wise decision later in the show and was able to do that. That set up the problem that he had to pay the money back to Antonio because Antonio had a ship lost at sea.

There was some comic relief in the show. Launcelot was played by **Carl Brandt Long**. He played the role as if he were a drunkard the entire time. He kept the show moving along. At the same time you were sympathetic because you were not sure why he was drunk, what had he done. I liked that air of mystery that he brought into it. I think all the actors did a pretty good job with *The Merchant of Venice*.

The show runs almost two and a half hours with one intermission. It is playing at the Cramer Center in Manassas, Virginia through Sunday, October 21st. Friday and Saturday nights at 8 and Sundays at 3. If you've seen the show we'd like to hear your comments about it. You can do that here at ShowBizRadio.net. We'd also like to invite you to [join our free mailing list](#) so you can stay informed with all the happenings in the DC area theater community.

And now, on with the show.

Also, listen to [talkback discussion with the cast and crew](#) to learn more about the show.

Cast

- Antonio: George Kitchen
- Salerio: Paul D. Rubenstein
- Solanio/Old Gobbo: Jonathan Marget
- Bassanio: Christopher C. Holbert
- Lorenzo: William MacLeod
- Gratiano: Colby Codding
- Portia: Rachael Lee Poole

- Nerissa: Pamela Sabella
- Servant/Tubal/Balthasar/Stephana: Erin Gallalee
- Shylock: Jay Tilley
- Lancelot: Carl Brandt Long
- Leonardo/Prince of Arragon/Gaoler: Santiago Melli-Huber
- Jessica: Laura Rocklyn
- Prince of Morocco/Servant/Duke: Rich Scanlan

Crew

- Artistic Director: Christine D. Lange
- Managing Director: Sara Joy Lebowitz
- Production Manager: Melissa Jo York-Tilley
- Director: Bob Smith
- Stage Manager/Props Mistress: Jordan Day
- Assistant Stage Manager: Morgan Sexton
- Assistant Director: Christie Swaney
- Set Designer: Thomas Hannon
- Master Carpenter: Thomas Hannon
- Lighting Designer: William MacLeod
- Master Electrician: William MacLeod
- Light Board Operator: Morgan Sexton
- Sound Designer: Colby Codding
- Sound Board Operator: Christie Swaney
- Costume Designer: Stephanie Powlen
- Hair and Makeup Designer: Melissa Jo York-Tilley
- House Manager: Jenny Green
- Assistant House Manager: Kristen Green
- Publicity: Jay Tilley
- Poster Designer: Jennifer Reitz
- Program Designer: Bob Smith
- Press Photos: Dave Harback and Tim Betts

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