COMING ATTRACTIONS
AT THE
SCHOOL OF DRAMA

THE ARCHITECT AND
THE EMPEROR OF ASSYRIA
Fernando Arrabal
Penthouse Theatre
May 27–June 6

Call 543-4880 for subscription
and ticket information!

SCHOOL OF DRAMA

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Associate Director, Jack Wolcott
Theatre History, Misha Berson
Artist in Residence, Tim Bond
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Acting, Jack Clay
Playwriting, M. E. Comtois
Design, Robert A. Dahlstrom
Design, Dick Devin
Acting, Max Dixon
Design, William Forrester
Design, Sarah Nash Gates

Technical Director, Jay O. Glerum
Acting, Robyn Hunt
Theatre History, Richard Lorenzen
Design, Richard Paulsen
Acting, Steven Pearson
Theory, Michael Quinn
Acting, Judith Shahn
Child Drama, Aurora Valentinetti
Directing, M. Burke Walker

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Agnes Haaga

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Robert Loper
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Geraldine Siks
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NEXT SEASON

Play titles for the 1992–93 season will be announced after June 30. Our popular package rates will continue to be available, including the THEATRE NUT and the CRAZY EIGHT. Student PLAYCARDS will be available after September 1st. You can see six plays any day of the week except Monday; you can take a date to three plays, five friends to one play or see all six yourself for a special price.

Call the UW Arts Ticket Office at 543-4880 for current season information; after June 30st for the 1992 – 93 season information; and after September 1st for PLAYCARD information.

MERCHANT OF VENICE
by William Shakespeare

UW
School of DRAMA
The Playhouse
26th Season
171st Production
May 6 – 16
About the Play

The Merchant of Venice

The Merchant of Venice sorts through a variety of human relationships where love, hate and friendship are mediated through financial transactions. The friendship of noble Bassanio and ambitious merchant Antonio is established through mutual admiration and monetary exchange. Portia's renowned beauty finds its source equally in her physical appearance, the value of her estate, and her generosity. The hatred between Shylock and Antonio, something before the events of the play begin, erupts into a dangerous confrontation once the two men are tied together by the loan and its bond. The threat of an outside element coming between simple human interactions causes the greatest anxiety in this play. Money, rings or caskets dominate relationships in Merchant. Antonio's friendship and the obligation demanded by his generosity come between the lovers Bassanio and Portia, significantly before their love is sealed. The loan which enables this gift and its surety, the pound of Antonio's flesh, mediates in turn the hatred of Shylock and Antonio. Too easily is a financial economy confused with social bonds as a market exchange replaces the sharing of affections.

The Play works to expel this mercantile confusion from the Venetian community as it drives toward a conclusion of social harmony. Once all debts are paid, the characters each reach a new understanding of relationships where money and wealth are valued in due proportion to human love. But is this harmony achieved completely without some nagging doubt? The play's overt anti-semitism makes it difficult for modern audiences to accept the final assertion of social accord. Shylock pays a high price, almost unfairly, so that the other characters can live happily. This sympathy is written into the play. Shylock's humanity asserts itself in spite of his stereotypical rhetoric. In fact, the play's problematic treatment of the stage Jew suggests that a community requires constant re-negotiations. The social harmony evidenced by the music of the spheres rarely finds expression:

Such harmony is in immortal souls, But whilst this muddy vesture of decay Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it

David Schulz, Dramaturg

Recommended Reading


The locale alternates between the City of Venice and the country Estate of Belmont.

Acknowledgements

A Contemporary Theatre, Empty Space Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Opera.

Please note: The taking of photographs during the performance is strictly prohibited. Please leave all beepers and paging devices and your name with the house manager. Also, out of respect for the artists and other audience members, children under five are not admitted.