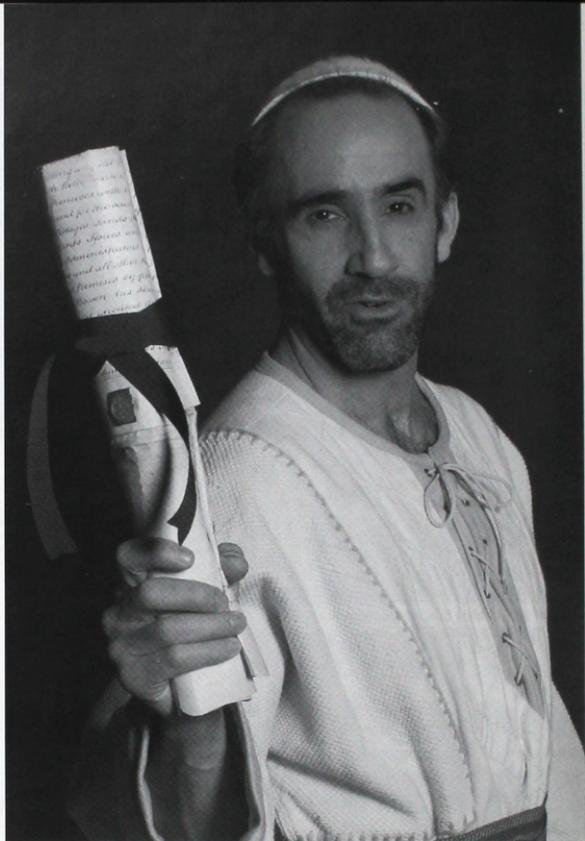


Donald Adams Tackles Shylock For Bard On The Beach

Actor Donald Adams has come a long way since the school drama productions at West Vancouver Secondary and his amateur theatre debut in West Vancouver Little Theatre's production *The Lodge*. This summer he will play the ever-provocative role of Shylock in Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival's production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Since receiving professional training at Simon Fraser University and The Vancouver Playhouse Acting School, Donald has become a well-respected BC actor and has played many Shakespeare roles for Bard on the Beach including Gremio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Antonio in *The Tempest* and Touchstone in *As You Like It*.

Shylock is by far Donald's biggest role with Bard and he feels a tremendous responsibility to bring his best to the part. His first goal in creating Shylock was to examine the character as a man rather than as an ethnic stereotype. Being non-Jewish, he felt it very important to spend time and care in researching the history of the Jewish religion, especially the medieval period. Over the years there have been many opinions on how Shylock should be portrayed and luckily the views of Donald and director Katrina Dunn have meshed perfectly. They were both very clear from the beginning that the production must be balanced and dignified,



and that Shylock would not be played as a villain or a buffoon. "He is a business man who is good at what he does and has the wealthy lifestyle to show for it." Donald states that "in the beginning of the play Shylock is not out for revenge, but simply out to change the way things have been for him in the past." He is treated horribly and "spit on and kicked" by Christians such as Antonio. It is true that Shylock does some very nasty things but as Donald says, "He has been driven to do it. Nobody is black and white and nobody has clean hands."

When asked if he had a favourite quote from *The Merchant of Venice*, one would think that the response would be the famous words: "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, do we not revenge?" (Act III, Scene 1). But Donald's response was quite different, replying with a line from the suspenseful court scene

where Shylock is defending his right to the bond:

"The pound of flesh which I demand of him

Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it.

If you deny me, fie upon your law!" (Act IV, Scene 1)

Bard on the Beach continues Tuesdays through Sundays in Vanier Park until September 21. *The Merchant of Venice* plays on the Mainstage in repertory with the merry farce *The Comedy of Errors* while the epic adventure *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* runs for July and August only on the Douglas Campbell Studio Stage. The plays are staged in open-ended tents, with the real-life backdrop of mountains, sea and sky framing the imaginary world on the stage. For a performance schedule check www.bardonthebeach.org or call the Bard Box Office at 604.739.0559.