

Riverside to host talk at ICPL on The Merchant of Venice's Shylock

Written by Sarah Burnett

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Iowa City, IA – Riverside Theatre will host the first in a series of special events related to its upcoming summer Festival production of *The Merchant of Venice*, by William Shakespeare, on Thursday, March 1 at 7 p.m. The lecture and presentation by Shakespearean scholar and UI English professor Miriam Gilbert, titled “Shakespeare and ‘the likeness of a Jew’ Shylock, Fagin and Disraeli” will take place at the Iowa City Public Library, 123 South Linn St, in Meeting Room A. The event is free and open to the public.

Shylock is one of Shakespeare's most famous—and most controversial—characters. During this presentation Gilbert will ask, is he a knife-wielding villain or a misunderstood victim? The talk will also examine how our view of Shylock has been influenced by figures from literature, from history, and from his various stage representations.

Riverside Theatre is receiving support from the National Endowment for the Arts for *The Merchant of Venice* and accompanying audience education and outreach efforts related to the

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theme of "the other" in the play.

Events featuring experts, scholars, community and religious leaders, aimed at confronting and countering notions of anti-Semitism, as well as additional types of other-focused hatred and prejudices will be presented this spring. Watch the Riverside Theatre website, www.riversidetheatre.org for more information.

In addition to The Merchant of Venice, this summer's Festival will include a production of Shakespeare's As You Like It. The plays will run in rotation from June 15 through July 8, 2012. The Merchant of Venice and As You Like It will be performed at the Riverside Festival Stage in Lower City Park. This outdoor venue is loosely based on Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and contains 472 permanent seats. Tickets for the Festival will go on sale in late spring. For more information go to www.riversidetheatre.org or call the Riverside Theatre Box Office at [319-338-7672](tel:319-338-7672).

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