

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

RENAISSANCE DRAMA TRANSFORMED

‘Twilight Production’ and ‘Magic Lantern Productions’ present:

THE JEW OF MALTA

by Christopher Marlowe

Dates: Tuesday 21st – Saturday 25th February

Time: 7:30 pm. (Thursday and Saturday matinees 2:30 pm.)

Venue: The OFS Studio Theatre

“Why, was there ever seen such villainy, So neatly plotted, and so well performed?”
(III.iii.1–2)

“This should provide us with some old school horror”
-The Oxford Student

Synopsis:

A skilful satire of religious hypocrisy and Machiavellian scheming, *The Jew of Malta* deals with the controversial themes of violence and anti-semitism, charting the story of a malevolent anti-hero, Barabas, as he seeks revenge on Ferneze, the governor of Malta. Barabas’s obsession with vengeance leads him into ever increasing acts of violence, compelling him even to murder his own daughter. As is the case with many of Marlowe’s tragic heroes, Barabas finally meets his end, but not before he has caused grievous harm to many.

Production Information:

Though set in 1565 and written around 1590, *The Jew of Malta* remains just as relevant and hard-hitting today as it was then. By placing the play in a modern context, award winning director Ashleigh Nguyen has translated it into a direct attack on corporate culture, political corruption and the ongoing problem of social estrangement. An unspecified locale and timeframe allow Nguyen subtly to convey the play’s many social issues, producing a vivid illustration of the power of greed over mankind’s wavering morality.

Excitingly, this will be the first time in which a single production has combined so many genres of performance art into the story-telling techniques of a Renaissance play. Live jazz, ballet, modern dance and singing are all employed to enhance the atmospheric setting and occasionally provide a surrealist ambience. Original footage filmed by the cast will be projected to replace the traditional static

sets, creating a constantly changing environment. The production remains faithful to the original script, while at the same time pursuing a technically ambitious approach which effectively conveys the chaos of Marlowe's society. This production of *The Jew of Malta* will be the first to be performed in Oxford for over four years and Director Nguyen says she is "very excited to be working on a production so technically ambitious and with such a brilliant cast".

Cast Information:

At the heart of the production is an outstanding cast, whose members bring together considerable experience in television and radio drama as well as professional theatre. Shaun Passey, (Barabas), performed in the modern-day comedy of manners, *Totally Over You*, a play written specially for the Shell Connections Competition by controversial playwright Mark Ravenhill. Shaun has also acted in Illyria Productions' amateur film, *A Bohemian Love Story* and recently toured with The Apostle Players, bringing their Christmas production to many West Midland venues.

Another outstanding member of the cast is Aneeqa Khan, an up and coming young actress who has already had much experience in television and radio. She has performed in *The Streets* directed by David Blair, *Northern Lights* directed by Tony Dowe and *Girls In Love* directed by Karen Stowe, to name but a few of her Granada productions. Aneeqa also worked with the BBC in *The Oddsquads* directed by John Godber and *Clear Confidence* directed by Ric Mellis. In a different genre, she performed a monologue for Radio 4 in a production of *The Pennine Way*. At Oxford Aneeqa was nominated for 'Best Supporting Actress' for her part in *Fragment of Her*, an entry in this year's Cuppers Competition of Oxford University Dramatic Society.

Company Information:

'Twilight Production' and 'Magic Lantern Productions' jointly supported *Measure For Measure*, a recent success at the OFS studio in November 2005. In the same month, 'Magic Lantern Productions' was the principal sponsor of *The Well of The Saint*, a brave production of the infrequently staged play by J.M Synge at the Burton Taylor Theatre. This received excellent press coverage, described as a "strong and thought-provoking enchantment" by the *Cherwell* and was awarded five stars by the *Oxford Student*. The current president of 'Magic Lantern', director Ashleigh Nguyen, was awarded second prize in the Filming Literature Competition 2005 for her short film, *The Convent Threshold* and is currently working on a new short film, *Student Life*.

Workshops Information:

Workshops are scheduled for Thursday the 23rd of February 2006 between 10:30 am until 12:30 pm and will be open to all ages. The workshops will be free of charge with the matinee performance at 2:30 pm. There will be a pre-show talk by a Marlowe lecturer of Oxford University and a post-show discussion with the cast and the director. For further information and booking details please contact:

Rachel Beddow – Education Officer
Mobile: 07791884402

Email: rachel.beddow@lmh.ox.ac.uk

Or,

Pippa Garland – Marketing Manager

Mobile: 07886153216

Email: philippa.garland@st-annes.ox.ac.uk

Further Information:

Further information on the play and the production can be found on www.jewofmalta.co.uk (after 25th January), or through contacting:

Michael Levy – Producer

Mobile: 07941382968

Email: michael.levy@some.ox.ac.uk

Or

Ashleigh Nguyen – Director

Mobile: 07921724744

Email: ashleigh.nguyen@st-annes.ox.ac.uk

-----END-----

Primary Contact:

Pippa Garland – Marketing Manager

Mobile: 07877572834

Email: philippa.garland@st-annes.ox.ac.uk

Website: www.jewofmalta.co.uk (launch on the 25th January '06)