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PRESS RELEASE

**THE BROAD STAGE PRESENTS F. MURRAY ABRAHAM
STARRING AS SHYLOCK**

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

DIRECTED BY DARKO TRESNJAK

Theater/Dinner Package Sponsored By Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel With Special Room Rates.

Opening Night, Thursday, April 14th, 2011 at 7:30pm With After-Party At Drago's

Play runs from Thursday, April 14 through Sunday, April 24th.

Los Angeles, CA, April 14th, 2011, Academy Award-winner (*Amadeus*) F. Murray Abraham stars as Shylock in Theatre for a New Audience's widely acclaimed 2007 production of *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Darko Tresnjak. The production sold out Off Broadway and at the Royal Shakespeare Company's Complete Works Festival, Stratford-upon-Avon. It returns to the stage this year for Theatre for a New Audience's first national tour, a four-city engagement that started in New York on February 2011 to rave reviews.

***The Merchant of Venice* opens at The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage at the Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center on April 14th and runs through April 24th.**

Charles Isherwood, *The New York Times*, wrote “Mr Abraham’s Shylock is probably the finest I’ve seen.” John Heilpern, *New York Observer*, said, “F. Murray Abraham’s Shylock touches greatness in every aspect of this immensely challenging role.” Writing for the *New York Review of Books*, Stephen Greenblatt said, Abraham’s Shylock, “a tormented, passionate father in a decadent Venice indifferent to his anguish is one of the great performances of our time (which) have included Laurence Olivier’s neurotic, buttoned-up Victorian businessman...Anthony Sher’s intellectual avenger and Henry Goodman’s unbearably poignant Weimar outsider”.

Darko Tresnjak received raves for his staging. When it played at the RSC, Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, gave the production four stars and said, “in its visible modernity, Tresnjak presents a money-driven world where wealth can never resolve inbuilt racial and religious tensions.” *The London Financial Times* called it “A ballsy and brilliant production.” *The New York Times* said, “a fully integrated vision by director Darko Tresnjak of a modern-day Venice as chilly, sleek and calculating as any wall street house.”

F. Murray Abraham has acted in over 80 films and 90 plays and won an Academy Award for Best Actor for the 1984 film *Amadeus*, for which he also received a Golden Globe and a Los Angeles Film Critics Award. His other film credits include *Star Trek: Insurrection*, *Children of the Revolution*, *Mighty Aphrodite*, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, *Scarface* and *The Name of the Rose*. Mr. Abraham made his stage debut in a 1966 Los Angeles production of Ray Bradbury's *The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit*. The next year, he made his Off-Broadway debut in *The Fantasticks* with Jerry Orbach and Nancy Allen. His Broadway debut was in *The Man in the Glass Booth* in 1968, which he followed with *The Ritz*, *Triumph of Love*, *Angels in America*, *A Christmas Carol*, etc.

Sharing the stage with Mr. Abraham in principal roles are Kate MacCluggage as Portia (*39 Steps*, Off-Broadway); Graham Hamilton as Bassanio (*Hamlet*, Theatre for a New Audience), Melissa Miller as Jessica (*I Never Sang for My Father* with Keir Dullea), Vince Nappo as Lorenzo (*2007 Merchant of Venice*), Jonathon Epstein as

The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage
The Edye Second Space

Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center
Location Address: 1310 11th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90403
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Phone: 310. 434. 3412 www.thebroadstage.com

Antonio (has performed with Shakespeare & Company, where he has appeared in *The Merchant of Venice*), and Christen Simon as Nerissa (2007 *Merchant of Venice*). Completing the company in major supporting roles are Andrew Dahl as Balthazar, Grant Goodman as Solanio, Christopher Randolph as Aaragon, the Duke and Tubal), Matthew Schneck as Solerio, Ted Schneider as Gratiano, Raphael Nash Thompson as Morocco and. Jacob Ming-Trent as Launcelot Gobbo

Darko Tresnjak directed Theatre for a New Audience's acclaimed productions of *All's Well That Ends Well* in 2006, *The Merchant of Venice* in 2007 and *Antony and Cleopatra* in 2008. He was the Artistic Director of the Old Globe's Shakespeare Festival, 2004 to 2009, where his Shakespeare credits include *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Pericles*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Coriolanus* and *Titus Andronicus*. Other Shakespeare credits include *The Winter's Tale* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* at The Public Theater and the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and *Twelfth Night* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He has also directed productions at Huntington Theatre Company (four seasons), Williamstown Theatre Festival (eight seasons), Westport Country Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre Company, Goodspeed Musicals, Vineyard Theatre Company, Blue Light Theater Company, Los Angeles Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Florida Grand Opera, Sarasota Opera, and Virginia Opera. Awards: San Diego Theatre Critics Awards for outstanding direction of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles* and Alan Schneider Award for Directing Upcoming: *Titus Andronicus* at Stratford Shakespeare Festival.

Tony Award-winner John Lee Beatty is designing the sets, David Weiner, the lights, Linda Cho, the costumes, Jane Shaw, the sound, and Matthew Myhrum, the video.

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The Merchant of Venice Package includes a one-night stay at Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel. Dinner for two in Ocean & Vine, including a starter, main course and glass of wine. The Merchant of Venice Package is available April 14-21, 2011. Rates start at \$359, based on availability. For reservations, please call 310-458-6700 and mention The Broad Stage.

About Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel

Situated on the edge of the Pacific, Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel is located steps from the famous fitness paths and outdoor parks that run along the Santa Monica shoreline. A recent top-to-bottom makeover brings exquisitely-restored marble floors, a beautifully reconceived lobby and a transformed oceanfront pool deck with oversized loungers and sleek cabanas that can be enjoyed while soaking up a magnificent sunset. Additional hotel features include 342 spacious guestrooms and suites, two restaurants and lounges, immediate proximity to Santa Monica's premier attractions and front row views of the Pacific Ocean and world-famous Santa Monica Pier.

About Theatre for a New Audience

Founded in 1979 by Jeffrey Horowitz, Theatre for a New Audience's mission is to help develop and vitalize the performance and study of Shakespeare and classical drama. The Theatre vigorously engages with Shakespeare and plays from the world repertoire. It has played on Broadway, toured nationally and internationally.

In 2001, Theatre for a New Audience became the first American theatre invited to bring a production of Shakespeare to the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), Stratford-upon-Avon. *Cymbeline* directed by Bartlett Sher, premiered at the RSC and in 2007, Theatre for a New Audience was invited to return with this production of ***The Merchant of Venice***.

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The Theatre's productions have been honored with Tony, OBIE, Drama Desk, Drama League, Callaway, Lortel and Audelco awards and nominations and reach an audience diverse in age, economics and cultural backgrounds. It created and runs the largest program in the New York City Public Schools for introducing students to Shakespeare, which has served over 122000 students. In conjunction with Columbia University, it runs a summer institute for NYC Public School teachers on the teaching of Shakespeare. It offers a free summer, drama program for high school students. The Theatre's distinctive Talk Back series for general audiences is free in conjunction with performances and its economically accessible ticket program includes the lowest reserved ticket price for youths in the city. In 2011, Theatre for a New Audience will break ground on its first home, a Center for Shakespeare and Classic Drama in downtown Brooklyn in the BAM Cultural District.

About The Broad Stage:

Under the leadership of Director Dale Franzen and Artistic Chair Dustin Hoffman, The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage at the Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center opened its doors in Santa Monica in October 2008. Inspired by Italian “horseshoe” theaters, yet conceived in an absolutely contemporary vernacular, The Broad Stage is an artist’s dream and an audience’s delight. Unlike any performance space in the country, it is sublimely intimate with 499-seats and strikingly grand at the same time – allowing eye contact with artists from the boxes to the back row –forging a new kind of artist and audience experience in Los Angeles. Theater, dance, film, operas, musicals, symphony and chamber orchestras will be presented on one of the city’s largest proscenium stages. Designed without compromise to embrace the artistic process from inspiration to opening night, and conceived as a global theater and community hub. In addition to The Broad Stage, The Edye Second Space, a smaller black box theater, presents new, developing and innovative work in theater, music and dance as part of the Under the Radar Series. Featuring younger, innovative artists

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and chamber pieces and plays, programming at The Edye is intentionally spontaneous, reflecting the dynamic nature of the space and allowing the latest, most exciting artists to be booked on short notice.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

The Merchant of Venice

Thursday, April 14th through Sunday April 24th

The Broad Stage is located at 1310 11th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Parking is FREE.

Thursday, April 14|7:30 pm – **Opening Night**

Friday, April 15|7:30 pm

Saturday, April 16|2:00 pm|7:30 pm

Sunday, April 17| 2:00 pm

Tuesday, April 19|7:30 pm

Wednesday, April 20| 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm

Thursday, April 21|7:30 pm

Friday, April 22| 7:30 pm

Saturday, April 23|2:00 pm|7:30 pm

Sunday, April 24|2:00 pm

Tickets: \$47 - \$175 and are available online at www.theBroadStage.com, or 310.434.3200. Parking is free.

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