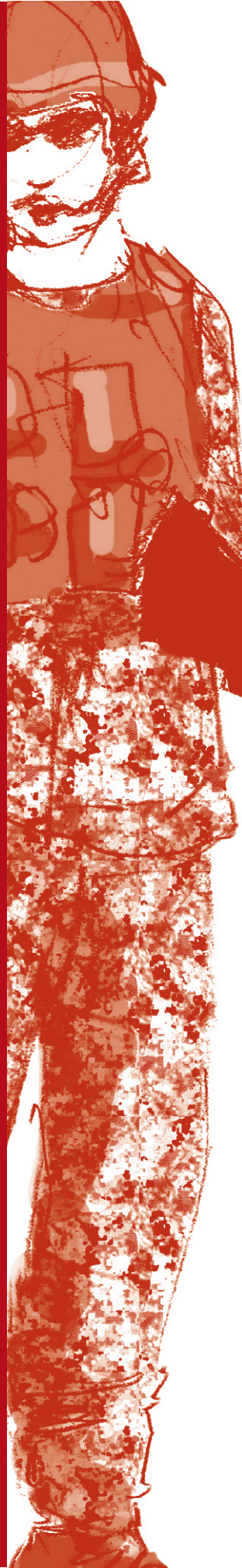


julius caesar

chicago
shakespeare theater
on navy pier



Teacher Handbook

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chicago shakespeare theater on navy pier

Barbara Gaines **Criss Henderson**
Artistic Director Executive Director

Chicago Shakespeare Theater is Chicago's professional theater dedicated to the works of William Shakespeare. Founded as Shakespeare Repertory in 1986, the company moved to its seven-story home on Navy Pier in 1999. In its Elizabethan-style courtyard theater, 500 seats on three levels wrap around a deep thrust stage—with only nine rows separating the farthest seat from the stage. Chicago Shakespeare also features a flexible 180-seat black box studio theater, a Teacher Resource Center, and a Shakespeare specialty bookstall.

Now in its twenty-sixth season, the Theater has produced nearly the entire Shakespeare canon: *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Cymbeline*, *Hamlet*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI Parts 1, 2 and 3*, *Julius Caesar*, *King John*, *King Lear*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *Pericles*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Chicago Shakespeare Theater was the 2008 recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award. Chicago's Jeff Awards year after year have honored the Theater, including repeated awards for Best Production and Best Director, the two highest honors in Chicago theater.

Since Chicago Shakespeare's founding, its programming for young audiences has been an essential element in the realization of its mission. Team Shakespeare supports education in our schools, where Shakespeare is part of every required curriculum. As a theater within a multicultural city, we are committed to bringing Shakespeare to a young and ethnically diverse audience of 40,000 students each year. Team Shakespeare's programming includes free teacher workshops, student matinees of main stage shows, post-performance discussions, comprehensive teacher handbooks, and an abridged, original production each year of one of the "curriculum plays." Team Shakespeare offers a region-wide forum for new vision and enthusiasm for teaching Shakespeare in our schools. This year, the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, honored that vision with the prestigious Shakespeare Steward Award. The 2012-2013 Season offers a student matinee series for three of Chicago Shakespeare Theater's full-length productions: in the winter, *The School for Lies*, a new adaptation by David Ives of Molière's *The Misanthrope*; and in the spring, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Henry VIII*. Also this winter, a 75-minute abridged version of *Romeo and Juliet* will be performed at the Theater on Navy Pier and will tour to schools and theaters across the region. We hope that you and your students will enjoy our work—and Shakespeare's creative genius brought to life on stage. ☆

Marilyn J. Halperin Director of Education
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Molly Topper Learning Programs Manager
Lydia Dreyer, Mariana Green Education Interns



JULIUS CAESAR

written by
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

directed by **JONATHAN MUNBY**



Julius Caesar, written 400 years ago about people living 2,000 years ago, has the danger of seeming very far away. Of having very little similarity to us. Of being about things we don't think about much. But its words sound too familiar and don't go away. "Freedom! Liberty! Tyranny is dead!"—we've heard them all as we watch pictures flash across the television screen. Shakespeare shows us power: power that some have, that others fear—and want—and that a mass of people searching for a hero has given away. We ought to recognize in Shakespeare's Rome some of the most difficult questions we confront living in our own politically divisive world. ★



ART THAT LIVES

Drama is a living art. It is written to be performed live before a group of people who form an audience and together experience a play. Cave paintings depicting men disguised as animals reveal that since ancient times, impersonation and imitation have served humans in their efforts to express themselves and to communicate. The drama of western civilization has its roots in the ancient Greeks' religious rituals and observances.

Until the Renaissance, when Shakespeare wrote, drama was closely tied to religious beliefs and practice. Drama not only depicts human communication, it is human communication. In theater, unlike television or film, there is a two-way communication that occurs between the actors and their audience. The audience hears and sees the actors, and the actors hear and see the audience. We are used to thinking about the actors' roles in a play, but may find it strange to imagine ourselves, the audience, playing an important role in this living art. Because the art lives, each production is guaranteed to be different, depending in part upon an audience's response. Live drama is the sharing of human experience, intensely and immediately, in the theater, which momentarily becomes our universe.

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A live theater production depends upon its audience. The best performances depend upon the best actors—and the best audiences. When the actors sense a responsive, interested audience, their work is at its best—full of animation and energy. When the actors sense disinterest, they too are distracted and the play they create is less interesting. One actor described the experience of live performance as a story told by the actors and audience together. In this sense, you are also a storyteller in the experience of live theater. We hope you'll enjoy your role—and will help us to give you a dramatic experience that you'll always remember.

[Theatrical performance] is essentially a sociable, communal affair. This is important. To resist this is, I think, to ruin one of the very important parts of the theatrical experience. Let the play and let the fact that temporarily you are not your private self, but a member of a closely fused group, make it easy for the performance to 'take you out of yourself.' This, I suggest, is the object of going to a play... to be taken out of yourself, out of your ordinary life, away from the ordinary world of everyday.

—TYRONE GUTHRIE, 1962

How can you help us give you the best performance we can?

- ★ **Please no talking during the performance.** It distracts the actors as well as the people sitting nearby.
- ★ **Respond naturally to our play.** Emotions are part of drama. We hope that you'll laugh, cry and even gasp—but as a natural response to the story, and not in order to distract attention from the stage.
- ★ **Please leave all “noisemakers”—food, gum, cell phones, iPods, etc.—back at school or on the bus!** In a quiet theater, wrappers and munching are heard by all, the actors included.
- ★ **No photographs of any kind, please!** Flashbulbs can make the actors lose their focus and can be dangerous. Digital cameras, along with all other kinds of recording devices, are prohibited, as is text-messaging.



BARD'S BIO

The exact date of William Shakespeare's birth is not known, but his baptism, traditionally three days after a child's birth, was recorded on April 26, 1564. His father John Shakespeare was a tanner, glover, grain dealer and prominent town official of the thriving market town of Stratford-upon-Avon. His mother Mary Arden was the daughter of a prosperous, educated farmer. Though the records are lost, Shakespeare undoubtedly attended Stratford's grammar school, where he would have acquired some knowledge of Latin and Greek and the classical writers. There is no record that Shakespeare acquired a university education of any kind. Some skeptical scholars have raised doubts about whether Shakespeare, due to his relatively average level of education and humble origins, could have possibly written what has long been considered the best verse drama composed in the English language. But not until 1769, 150 years after Shakespeare's death, did these theories arise—and, to all appearances, Shakespeare's contemporaries and immediate successors never seemed to question whether William Shakespeare wrote the celebrated works attributed to him.

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At eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. They had one daughter Susanna, followed by twins, Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet, Shakespeare's only son, died at age eleven. From 1585, the year in which the twins were baptized, until 1592, when he is first referred to as a dramatist in London, we know nothing of Shakespeare's life. Consequently, these seven so-called "lost years" are filled with legend and conjecture. We may never know what brought Shakespeare to London or how he entered its world of theater. The first reference to Shakespeare as an actor and playwright appears in 1592 and was made by Robert Greene, a rival playwright and pamphleteer, who attacked Shakespeare as an "upstart crow" for presuming to write plays (when he was only a mere actor) and copying the works of established dramatists.

Subsequent references to Shakespeare indicate that as early as 1594 he was not only an actor and playwright, but also a partner in a new theatrical company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which soon became one of London's two principal companies. The company's name changed to the King's Men in 1603 with the accession of James I, and it endured until the Commonwealth closed the theaters in 1642. Beginning in 1599 the company acted primarily at the Globe playhouse, in which Shakespeare held a one-tenth interest.

During his career of approximately twenty years, Shakespeare wrote or collaborated on what most scholars now agree upon as thirty-eight plays. His earliest plays, including *Love's Labor's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III*, *King John* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, were written between 1589 and 1594. Between 1594 and 1599, Shakespeare wrote both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar* as well as other plays, including *Richard II*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *As You Like It*. His great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, were composed between 1599 and 1607, and were preceded by his last play traditionally categorized as comedy, *Measure for Measure*. The earlier histories, comedies and tragedies made way for Shakespeare's final dramatic form—the so-called "romances," which were written between 1606 and 1611 and include *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. These were the plays of a playwright no longer bound by the constraints of his earlier historical and tragic forms.

Shakespeare seldom devised his own plots for his plays, but creatively borrowed here and there from histories, prose romances, poems, and plays of his own and others. Shakespeare was an ingenious dramatic artist with a vast imagination. He created masterpieces out of conventional and unpromising material.

In Shakespeare's time, ancient stories were told and re-told. The important thing was not the originality of the plot but how the story was told. In the telling of a story, there are few writers who rival Shakespeare in theatricality, poetry, and depth of character.

By 1592 Shakespeare had emerged as a rising playwright in London, where he continued to enjoy fame and financial success as an actor, playwright and part-owner of London's leading theater company for nearly twenty years. Shakespeare retired in 1611 to live as a country gentleman in Stratford, his birthplace, until his death on April 23, 1616.

Shakespeare was the man, who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there.

—JOHN DRYDEN, 1688



THE FIRST FOLIO

Chicago Shakespeare Theater utilizes the First Folio as its script and acting "blueprint."

The First Folio serves as the most authentic and effective manual available to Shakespearean actors nearly 400 years after its publication. Shakespeare wrote his plays for the stage, not for print. In Shakespeare's day, plays were not considered literature at all. When a play was published—if it was published at all—it was printed inexpensively in a small book, called a "quarto," the sixteenth-century equivalent of our paperbacks. It was not until 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, when a contemporary of his, dramatist Ben Jonson, published his own plays in an oversized book called a "folio," that plays were viewed as literature worthy of publication. Jonson was chided as bold and arrogant for his venture.

Shakespeare, unlike Jonson, showed absolutely no interest or involvement in the publication of his plays. During Shakespeare's lifetime, only half of his plays were ever printed, and those as quartos. He did, however, oversee the publication of three narrative poems and a collection of 154 sonnets. It was not until seven years after the playwright's death that two of his close colleagues decided to ignore tradition and gather his plays for publication. In 1623, the First Folio, a book containing thirty-six of his thirty-eight plays, was published. The First Folio was compiled from stage prompt books, the playwright's handwritten manuscripts, various versions of some of the plays already published, and from his actors' memories. Its large format (much like a modern atlas) was traditionally reserved for the "authority" of religious and classical works.



Shakespeare's First Folio took five "compositors" two and one-half years to print. The compositors manually set each individual letter of type by first memorizing the text line by line. There was no editor overseeing the printing, and the compositors frequently altered punctuation and spelling. Errors caught in printing would be corrected, but due to the prohibitively high cost of paper, earlier copies remained intact. Of the 1,200 copies of the First Folio that were printed, approximately 230 survive today, each slightly different. Chicago's Newberry Library contains an original First Folio in its rich collections.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater utilizes the First Folio as the basis for its playscripts. Its punctuation gives clues to actors about what words to emphasize and about what ideas are important. In Shakespeare's own theater company, with only a few days to rehearse each new play, these built-in clues were essential. Today they still help actors make the language easier to break apart—even though you're hearing language that's 400 years "younger" than ours.

A key to understanding Shakespeare's language is to appreciate the attitude toward speech accepted by him and his contemporaries. Speech was traditionally and piously regarded as God's final and consummate gift to man. Speech was thus to Elizabethans a source of enormous power for good or ill... Hence the struggle to excel in eloquent utterance.

—DAVID BEVINGTON, 1980



TEACHER RESOURCE CENTER

Teachers, looking for new ideas? Check out our Teacher Resource Center, located on the Theater's fourth level. In addition to its primary focus on teaching Shakespeare in performance, the collection includes a number of biographies, history books, scholarly criticism, periodicals and books for young readers about Shakespeare's life and times. The collection also includes reference materials and dictionaries that specifically target Shakespeare's language.

Call the Education Department at 312.595.5678 to schedule a visit—on your own or with your colleagues.



SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

Elizabeth I ruled England for forty-five years from 1558 to 1603 in a time of relative prosperity and peace. "Few monarchs," says Shakespearean scholar David Bevington, "have ever influenced an

age so pervasively and left their stamp on it so permanently." The daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth was regarded by many Catholics as an illegitimate child—and an illegitimate monarch. The politics of religion constantly threatened Elizabeth's reign, even though it was one of the most secure that England had known for hundreds of years.

Elizabeth had no heir, and throughout her reign the politics of succession posed a real threat to the nation's peace—and provided a recurrent subject of Shakespeare's plays. While Shakespeare was writing *Julius Caesar*, the Earl of Essex, one of the Queen's favorite courtiers, rebelled against her government. Shakespeare's portrayal of the forced abdication of a king in *Richard II* was censored in performance during Elizabeth's reign.

Elizabethan England was a smaller, more isolated country than it had been previously or would be subsequently. It had withdrawn from its extensive empire on the Continent, and its explorations of the New World had barely begun. There was a period of internal economic development as Elizabeth ignored the counsel of her advisors and kept out of war until the attempted invasion by Spain and the Great Armada in 1588. England's economy was still based in agriculture, and its farmers were poor and embittered by strife with rich landowners who "enclosed" what was once the farmers' cropland for pastures. Uprisings and food riots were commonplace in the rural area surrounding Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare grew up.

London, then the largest city of Europe, was a city of contrasts: the richest and the poorest of England lived there, side by side. While many bettered themselves in a developing urban economy, unemployment was a serious problem. It was a time of change and social mobility. For the first time in English history, a rising middle class aspired to the wealth and status of the aristocracy.

Under Elizabeth, England returned to Protestantism. But in her masterful style of accommodation and compromise, she incorporated an essentially traditional and Catholic doctrine into an Episcopal form of church government that was ruled by the Crown and England's clergy rather than by Rome's Pope.



Extremists on the religious right and left hated her rule and wanted to see Elizabeth overthrown. She was declared a heretic by Rome in 1569, and her life was endangered.

"Her combination of imperious will and femininity and her brilliant handling of her many contending male admirers have become legendary," says David Bevington, and resulted in a monarchy that remained secure in the face of religious and political threats from many sides. In choosing not to marry, Elizabeth avoided allying herself and her throne with a foreign country or an English faction which might threaten her broad base of power and influence.

Throughout Early Modern Europe, governments were centralized, assuming the power that once belonged to city-states and feudal lords. The rule of monarchs like Queen Elizabeth I was absolute. She and her subjects viewed the monarch as God's deputy, and the divine right of kings was a cherished doctrine (and became the subject of Shakespeare's history plays). It was this doctrine that condemned rebellion as an act of disobedience against God, but could not protect Elizabeth from rebellion at home, even from her closest advisors, or from challenges from abroad.

Childless, Elizabeth I died in 1603. The crown passed to her cousin James VI, King of Scotland, who became England's King James I. Ruling from 1603 to 1625 (Shakespeare died in 1616), James I was responsible for overseeing the creation of a new bible, which in its powerful cadence and poetry would remain a legacy of this fertile time, just as Shakespeare's canon has. But his reign was troubled with political and religious controversy. It would be James's son, Charles I, who was beheaded in the English civil wars of the 1640s for tyrannically abusing what he believed was his divinely ordained power. ★



THE RENAISSANCE THEATER

A man who would later become an associate of Shakespeare's, James Burbage, built the first commercial theater in England in 1576, not much more than a decade before Shakespeare

first arrived on the London theater scene—a convergence of two events that would change history. Burbage skirted rigid restrictions governing entertainment in London by placing his theater just outside the city walls, in a community with the unglamorous name of "Shoreditch."

Burbage was not the only one to dodge the severe rules of the Common Council of London by setting up shop in Shoreditch. His neighbors were other businesses of marginal reputation, including London's brothels and bear-baiting arenas. Actors in Shakespeare's day were legally given the status of "vagabonds." They were considered little better than common criminals unless they could secure the patronage of a nobleman or, better still, the monarch.

Shakespeare and his fellow actors managed to secure both. They provided popular entertainment at Queen Elizabeth's court as the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and continued to enjoy court patronage after King James came to the throne in 1603, when they became the King's Men. Their success at court gave Shakespeare and his fellow shareholders in the Lord Chamberlain's company the funds to build the Globe playhouse in 1599. The Globe joined a handful of other theaters located just out of the city's jurisdiction as one of the first public theaters in England.

Shakespeare may have developed his love for the theater by watching traveling acting troupes temporarily transform the courtyard of an inn or town square into a theater. When he was a boy growing up in Stratford-upon-Avon, acting troupes traveled around the countryside in flatbed, horse-drawn carts, which did triple duty as transportation, stage, and storage for props and costumes. Their horses pulled the cart into an inn yard or the courtyard of a country estate or college. People gathered around to watch, some leaning over the rails from the balconies above to view the action on the impromptu stage below.

Many of these traveling performances staged religious stories, enacting important scenes from the Bible—the form of theater that endured throughout the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance, the enacted stories became more secular. Public officials scorned the theater as immoral and frivolous. The theaters just outside London's walls came to be feared as places where



physical, moral and social corruption spread. The authorities frequently shut them down during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when the city was menaced by the plague or by political and social rioting. When the theaters were open, the Master of the Revels had to read and approve every word in a new play. The show could not go on until he gave his permission.

All kinds of people came to plays at the Globe, and they came in great numbers. A full house in the Globe numbered about 3,000 people. Though the same dimensions as the original structure, the reconstruction of the Globe holds 1,500 at maximum capacity—an indication of just how close those 3,000 people must have been to one another. They arrived well before the play began to meet friends, drink ale and snack on the refreshments sold at the lays. An outing to the theater might take half the day. It was more like tailgating at a football game, or going with friends to a rock concert, than our experience of attending theater today.

Affluent patrons paid two to three pence or more for gallery seats (like the two levels of balcony seating at Chicago Shakespeare Theater) while the “common folk”—shopkeepers and artisans—stood for a penny, about a day’s wages for a skilled worker. They were a diverse and demanding group, and Shakespeare depicted characters and situations that appealed to every cross-section of Renaissance society. The vitality and financial success of the Elizabethan theater is without equal in English history.

There was no electricity for lighting, so all plays were performed in daylight. Sets and props were bare and basic. A throne, table or bed had to be brought on stage during the action since Elizabethan plays were written to be performed without scene breaks or intermissions. When the stage directions for *Macbeth* indicate that “a banquet is prepared,” the stage keepers prepared the banquet in full view of the audience. From what scholars can best reconstruct about performance conventions, Shakespeare’s plays were performed primarily in “modern” dress—that is, the clothes of Shakespeare’s time—regardless of their historical setting. The actors wore the same clothes on the stage as their contemporaries wore on the street. Hand-me-downs from the English aristocracy provided the elegant costumes for the play’s royalty.

Most new plays had short runs and were seldom revived. The acting companies were always in rehearsal for new shows but, due to the number of ongoing and upcoming productions, most plays were rehearsed for just a few days.

It was not until 1660 that women would be permitted to act on the English stage. Female roles were performed by boys or young men. Elaborate Elizabethan and Jacobean dresses disguised a man’s shape and the young actors were readily accepted as “women” by the audience.



An Elizabethan sketch of the original Swan

In 1642 the Puritans succeeded in closing the theaters altogether. They did not reopen until the English monarchy was restored and Charles II came to the throne in 1660. A number of theaters, including the Globe, were not open very long before the Great Fire of London destroyed them in 1666. During the eighteen years of Commonwealth rule, years when the English theaters were closed, many of the traditions of playing Shakespeare were lost.

The new theater of the Restoration approached Shakespeare’s plays very differently, rewriting and adapting his original scripts to suit the audience’s contemporary tastes. It is left to scholars of Early Modern English drama to reconstruct the traditions of Elizabethan theater from clues left behind. ★



COURTYARD-STYLE THEATER

Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s unique performance space reflects elements of both the first public playhouses in London and the courtyards of inns-turned-theaters, in which the young Shakespeare might first have acquired his love of the stage.

The interior of the Globe playhouse, opened in 1599, was simple and similar to that of Chicago Shakespeare Theater—a raised platform for the stage surrounded by an open, circular area with three galleries, one above the other. Both theaters use a thrust stage with an open performance area upstage; basically, the entire performance space is in the shape of a capital “T.” The audience sits on three sides of the thrust stage, so the play is staged in the middle of the audience—much like the Elizabethan Swan theater’s design, for which a traveler’s careful sketch still remains. This immersion of the stage and the action performed on it creates a three-dimensional theater that demands three-dimensional directing, acting and design elements.



The people sitting in the side seats have the closest interaction with the performers, and the performers with them. The play unfolds between the audience members seated along the sides, and the actors draw upon the responses of the audience (laughter, gasps, nervous shifting in chairs when tension mounts) as they perform.

As an audience member, your facial expressions and body language serve both as the focal point of the actors' energy and the backdrop for the other audience members seated across from you. Architect David Taylor and his company, Theatre Projects Consultants, worked closely with Chicago Shakespeare Theater's leadership to design this courtyard theater. "It's important that we don't lose the performer among the faces, but it's essential to understand that every single face is a live piece of scenery reflecting and framing what's going on," Taylor explains. "That's the reason why the courtyard theater shape is such a wonderful historical springboard for modern theater design."

"The backdrop and the scenery for Shakespeare is the human race," Taylor notes, "so we're putting Shakespeare into its proper context by making human faces the backdrop for those sitting in any seat in the theater." According to Taylor, "this close, close relationship with the performers on stage is the very essence of the courtyard experience. The courtyard experience was about leaning out of windows. It was about throwing open the windows in the courtyard when the stage was brought through on a cart and leaning out and interacting." Audience members seated in the galleries at Chicago Shakespeare Theater are encouraged to use the "leaning rails" to watch the players below—like those watching from an inn's balconies centuries ago when a traveling troupe set up its temporary stage.

The actors and the audience share the experience of seeing and interacting with one another. Taylor thinks that actors benefit tremendously from the courtyard design: "They're not looking at people sitting in straight rows, disconnected from everybody around them in big seats. There's a sense of community in the space, a sense of embracing the performer on stage." Actors are always fed by the energy generated from their audience. The design of Chicago Shakespeare Theater offers a feast of feedback to the actors on its stage.



Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Other theaters have been modeled upon the Elizabethan experience of courtyard theater, perhaps most notably the Royal Shakespeare Company's Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Swan served as a model for Chicago Shakespeare Theater. With their deep thrust stages, both were designed

to create an intimate relationship between actors and audience. Prominent architectural elements in both theaters are the brick walls that surround the audience and natural wood that creates a feeling of warmth. Brick is an aesthetic choice but, due to its particular design, it also serves as an acoustical choice. The angle of the bricks in the side walls helps diffuse sound, sending it in different directions throughout the theater. The sound, lighting and rigging systems are all state-of-the-art. Chicago Shakespeare Theater's design accommodates a wide array of possibilities for structuring and using the performance space.

Shakespearean theater is about people. As Taylor describes the experience, "You're the scenery. You're the special effects. And the people you see performing this play are performing it in front, and out of, you." ✪



BARD CARD PROGRAM

The **Bard Card Program** encourages Team Shakespeare students who first attend Chicago Shakespeare Theater on a field trip to return on their own with friends and family. Bard Card student members may purchase two tickets to each full-length, main-stage show at \$17 each for the remainder of the 2012/13 Season and all of the 2013/14 Season. The two-year membership is designed to bridge the gap between a school trip and a student's personal life. The program's mission is to make tickets affordable to students, so they learn how to make Shakespeare and theater a continuing part of their lives.

You and your students will be receiving information on the Bard Card when you come to the Theater. Please encourage them to consider becoming members!



1300

- 1326** Founding of universities at Oxford and Cambridge
- 1348** Boccaccio's *Decameron*
- 1349** Bubonic Plague kills one-third of England's population
- 1387** Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

1400

- ca. 1440** Johannes Gutenberg invents printing press
- 1472** Dante's *Divine Comedy* first printed
- 1492** Christopher Columbus lands at Cuba
- 1497** Vasco da Gama sails around Cape of Good Hope

1500

- 1501-4** Michelangelo's *David* sculpture
- 1503** Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*
- 1512** Copernicus' *Commentariolus* published, theorizing that Earth and other planets revolve around sun
- 1518** License to import 4,000 African slaves to Spanish American colonies granted to Lorens de Gominzot
- 1519** Ferdinand Magellan's trip around the world
- 1519** Conquest of Mexico by Cortez
- 1522** Luther's translation of the New Testament

1525

- 1531** Henry VIII recognized as Supreme Head of the Church of England
- 1533** Henry VIII secretly marries Anne Boleyn, and is excommunicated by Pope
- 1539** Hernando de Soto explores Florida
- 1540** G.L. de Cardenas "discovers" Grand Canyon
- 1541** Hernando de Soto "discovers" the Mississippi

1550

- 1558** Coronation of Queen Elizabeth I
- 1562** John Hawkins begins slave trade between Guinea and West Indies
- 1564** Birth of William Shakespeare and Galileo
- 1565** Pencils first manufactured in England
- 1570** Pope Pius V excommunicates Queen Elizabeth
- 1573** Francis Drake sees the Pacific Ocean

1575

- 1576** Mayor of London forbids theatrical performances in the City
Burbage erects first public theater in England
(the "Theater" in Shoreditch)
- 1577** Drake's trip around the world
- 1580** *Essays* of Montaigne published
- 1582** Marriage license issued for William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway

SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

CA. 1592-1595 comedies

Love's Labor's Lost
The Comedy of Errors
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Taming of the Shrew

histories

1, 2, 3 Henry VI
Richard III
King John

tragedies

Titus Andronicus
Romeo and Juliet

the sonnets

probably written
in this period



- 1585** Daughter Susanna Shakespeare christened
Christening of son Hamnet and twin Judith
- 1587** Mary Queen of Scots executed
- 1588** Destruction of the Spanish Armada
- 1592** Shakespeare listed with the Lord Chamberlain's Men
- 1593-4** Plague closes London playhouses for 20 months
- 1595** Coat of arms granted to Shakespeare's father, John
- 1596** Death of son Hamnet, age 11
Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*
- 1597** Shakespeare, one of London's most successful playwrights,
buys New Place, one of the grandest houses in Stratford-upon-Avon
- 1599** Globe Theatre opens, as home to the Lord Chamberlain's Men,
with Shakespeare as part-owner
- 1600**
- 1602** Oxford University's Bodleian Library opens
- 1603** Death of Queen Elizabeth, coronation of James I
Lord Chamberlain's Men become the King's Men upon endorsement of James I
- 1603-11** Plague closes London playhouses for at least 68 months (nearly 6 years)
- 1605** Cervantes' *Don Quixote Part 1* published
- 1607** Marriage of Susanna Shakespeare to Dr. John Hall
Founding of Jamestown, Virginia, first English settlement on
American mainland
- 1608** *A true relation of such Occurances and Accidents of Note as hath passed
in Virginia* by John Smith
Galileo constructs astronomical telescope
- 1609** Blackfriars Theatre, London's first commercial indoor theater,
becomes winter home of the King's Men
- 1611** "King James Version" of the Bible published
- 1613** Globe Theatre destroyed by fire
- 1614** Globe Theatre rebuilt
- 1615** Galileo faces the Inquisition for the first time
- 1616** Judith Shakespeare marries Thomas Quinney
Death of William Shakespeare, age 52
- 1618** Copernican system condemned by Roman Catholic Church
- 1619** First African slaves arrive in Virginia
- 1623** The First Folio, the first compiled text of Shakespeare's complete works published

1625

- 1625** James I dies, succeeded by Charles I
- 1633** Galileo recants before the Inquisition
- 1636** Harvard College founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts
- 1642** Civil War in England begins
- 1642** Puritans close theaters throughout England until following the Restoration
of the Monarchy, 18 years later, with Charles II
- 1649** Charles I beheaded
Commonwealth declared

CA. 1596-1600 comedies

The Merchant of Venice
Much Ado About Nothing
The Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night

histories

Richard II
1,2 Henry IV
Henry V

tragedies

✱ Julius Caesar

CA. 1601-1609 comedies

Troilus and Cressida
All's Well That Ends Well

tragedies

Hamlet
Othello
King Lear
Macbeth
Antony and Cleopatra
Timon of Athens
Coriolanus
Measure for Measure

CA. 1609-1613 romances

Pericles
Cymbeline
The Winter's Tale
The Tempest
The Two Noble Kinsmen

histories

Henry VIII



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Caesarians

JULIUS CAESAR General and ruler of Rome

CALPHURNIA Wife to Caesar

MARC ANTONY Caesar's favorite;
one of three generals (the Triumvirate)
who lead Rome after Caesar's death.

OCTAVIUS Caesar's nephew and heir;
a member of the Triumvirate.

LEPIDUS Antony and Octavius' ally;
a member of the Triumvirate

The Republican Conspiracy, Family and Followers

MARCUS BRUTUS Senator recruited
to lead the conspiracy

PORTIA Wife to Brutus

LUCIUS His young servant

CAIUS CASSIUS Senator and friend to Brutus;
organizes conspiracy

CASCA Senator

CINNA Senator

DECIUS BRUTUS Senator

LIGARIUS Senator

METELLUS CIMBER Senator

TREBONIUS Senator

Other Senators

CICERO

PUBLIUS

POPILIUS

Other Romans

FLAVIUS Tribune and Republican

MARULLUS Tribune and Republican

ARTEMIDORUS Rhetorician and teacher

CINNA Poet

SOOTHSAYER

SERVANTS, ARTISANS, CITIZENS, PLEBEIANS

The Armies of Brutus and Cassius

LUCILIUS

TITINIUS

MESSALA

STRATO

VOLUMNIUS

VARRUS

YOUNG CATO

FLAVIUS

PINDARUS Slave, freed by his service to Cassius



COSTUME RENDERINGS BY ILONA SOMOGYI



THE STORY

All Rome takes to the streets in celebration: the great general Julius Caesar returns triumphant from his victory over Pompey. In a republic where no man may reign, the Senate now moves to place a crown on Caesar's head. But to those who fear a ruler's absolute power, the lifeblood of their republic,

they say, rests upon the death of this one man. Led by Cassius, the men conspire to assassinate Caesar before he can be proclaimed king. Requiring the support of a high-minded colleague like Brutus to lend respectability to their plot, it is left to Cassius to persuade his friend and ally to their side.

Caesar dismisses the nightmares of his wife and the prophecies of a soothsayer, and ventures out to the Senate. It is the Ides of March. Soon the great Caesar, conqueror of a vast empire, will lie silenced in his blood, surrounded by his murderers—the senators of Rome.

Brutus explains the necessity for Caesar's death to a bewildered crowd, calmed until Caesar's ally, Antony, with passionate words transforms them from frightened fragments into a murderous mob. Forced to flee Rome, Brutus and Cassius gather armies. Octavius, Caesar's nephew and heir, alongside Antony takes control of Rome, and together they plan the execution of all who threaten their power. It will be at Philippi that Brutus faces the spirit of Caesar—and Rome, its fate. ★



ACT-BY-ACT SYNOPSIS

Act 1

Flavio and Marullus break up a crowd of commoners celebrating the victory of Julius Caesar, who has returned to Rome from a civil war fought against his co-ruler, Pompey. The two officials shame

the people for celebrating the defeat of one Roman by another, and tear down the decorations honoring Caesar. Attending a race in celebration of the Roman Holiday Lupercalia, Caesar asks his friend Marc Antony to touch his wife Calphurnia as he runs by in the race. (Roman tradition held that a woman's pregnancy was assured by the touch of a runner in the race—and Caesar had no heir.) A Soothsayer approaches Caesar and warns him to “beware the Ides of March”—the fifteenth day of March. Caesar ignores him and continues on to the festival.

Two senators, Cassius and Brutus, stay behind, discussing how they fear that Caesar wants to rule Rome single-handedly. Cassius tells Brutus that the people are looking to him for leadership. They hear cheers, and fear the populace is cheering in support of Caesar as their king. Cassius reminds Brutus of the revolt that founded the Republic—led by Brutus's own ancestor—in hopes of coaxing Brutus to join the conspirators' cause against Caesar's rule. Brutus admits to having a similar plan in mind. Casca, another Roman senator, joins them and reports that Caesar was indeed offered a crown three times, but declined it each time. Left by himself, Cassius reveals that he believes Brutus to be easy to manipulate, and plans to convince him to rise up against Caesar by sending Brutus forged letters, supposedly from angry citizens urging him to take action against Caesar. Cassius convinces Casca to join the conspirators, and they plan to meet later in secret to discuss the plot. Cassius instructs Cinna, a fellow conspirator, to leave the forged letters for Brutus.



Act 2

Sleepless, Brutus is contemplating joining the conspirators in their plot when his servant, Lucius, brings him one of the forged letters he found. The letter asks Brutus to take leadership for the people of Rome. Lucius announces the arrival of a group of men requesting to speak with Brutus. The conspirators come in the middle of the night to convince Brutus that Caesar must be killed, and that only Brutus can save Rome from tyranny. Brutus agrees that Caesar must die, but convinces the others that to kill Antony would prove them nothing more than bloodthirsty savages. They decide the assassination will happen the next day at the Senate. Decius volunteers to make sure that Caesar shows up. Brutus's wife Portia asks him why he has been acting so strange and distant from her, and he promises to tell her later. Calphurnia, Caesar's wife, warns her husband of her premonition in her dreams of his violent death, and begs him to stay home from the Senate. Caesar doesn't listen, but when she implores him to stay as a favor to her rather than as a bow to caution, he consents. However, when Decius arrives at Caesar's home to ensure his presence in the Senate that day, he deceptively interprets Calphurnia's nightmares favorably. He tells Caesar that the senators are planning to offer him the crown that day, and that not showing up may force them to reconsider their decision. Artemidorus, a teacher, plans to intercept Caesar with a letter warning him not to trust the conspirators.

Act 3

Caesar receives two more warnings on his way to the Senate—from the Soothsayer again as well as the letter from Artemidorus, which he never reads. At the Senate, Trebonius lures Caesar's devoted friend Marc Antony away as the conspirators surround Caesar and stab him to death. Brutus orders them all to bathe their hands and swords in Caesar's blood. Upon seeing Caesar dead in cold blood, Marc Antony pledges himself to the conspirators, asking only to be allowed to speak to the public at his friend's funeral. Brutus grants Antony's wish against Cassius's strong objections. Left alone with Caesar's body, Antony promises revenge. Brutus speaks to the bewildered Romans, explaining that Caesar's death was necessary to keep Rome in the hands of the people, and the crowd is momentarily appeased. When Antony addresses the people, he claims that Caesar had no intention of taking Rome out of the hands of the people,

and succeeds in turning the crowd against the conspirators. The angry mob rages through the streets of Rome, searching for anyone responsible for Caesar's death. They come upon a poet named Cinna and taking him for Cinna the conspirator, kill him because he shares the name of one of the conspirators. Brutus and Cassius escape the mob and flee the city.

Act 4

Ruling Rome as a triumvirate, Antony, Octavius (Caesar's nephew and heir) and their ally Lepidus join forces to prepare for war against Caesar's murderers. Between them, they coldly barter who will live and who will die, agreeing to kill Lepidus's own brother.

Hiding out in the city of Sardis, Cassius confronts Brutus in a fury for punishing one of his men for accepting bribes. Brutus in turn accuses Cassius of taking bribes. The fight escalates to the point where Cassius asks Brutus to kill him. Brutus's rage spent, the two men forgive one another. Brutus confides that Portia has taken her own life. Brutus convinces Cassius not to wait for Antony's army to find them, but to head to Philippi to seek out their enemy. Alone in his tent, Brutus sees Caesar's ghost who tells him that they will meet again at Philippi.

Act 5

Failing at dialogue, the two sides meet again on the battlefield. Fearing that Antony's soldiers are approaching, Cassius sends Titinius, his scout, to discover their identity. The troops are actually members of Brutus's army, and Titinius joins their ranks. Pindarus mistakenly reports to his master Cassius that the enemy has captured Titinius. Believing the battle lost, Cassius orders Pindarus to kill him. Brutus attacks the enemy again, but is defeated. Claiming to be Brutus to protect his master, Lucius allows himself to be taken prisoner. Antony realizes that Lucius is not Brutus and spares him. Convinced that all is lost, Brutus urges one of his soldiers to assist him in his suicide lest he be taken prisoner by Antony, and runs himself into his own sword. Antony finds Brutus's corpse and proclaims him the noblest Roman of all. ★



SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING NEW

Shakespeare's Sources for *Julius Caesar*

He was more original than the originals. He breathed upon dead bodies and brought them into life.

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, 1846

The detection of [Shakespeare's sources] has its own fascination and is useful insofar as they illustrate the workings of Shakespeare's imagination, but the most notable feature of the play is the dramatist's inventiveness, brilliantly fusing scattered elements from legend, folklore and earlier books and plays into a whole that remains as fresh and original now as when it was composed.

—R.A. FOAKES, 1984



Shakespeare seldom devised his own plots, but creatively borrowed here and there from histories, stories, poems, and plays of his own and others. He created masterpieces out of conventional and unpromising material, which begs the question: why, if Shakespeare was such a good writer, did he use others' stories so freely?

The answer lies in the fact that in the English Renaissance when Shakespeare wrote, a story did not “belong” to a single writer. Many plays were the result of multiple authors, and Shakespeare himself participated in collaborations. (*Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, for instance, are believed by scholars to be “partly Shakespeare.”) There were no copyright laws. And because so few people were literate (the printing press was invented only a century before Shakespeare's lifetime), much of history and the tales that people knew were communicated orally, passed from one generation to another. So stories belonged, in a sense, to the public, and all reached in to retell tales with their own personal spin on the material. In Shakespeare's time, creativity was not based upon the originality of the plot but on how the story was told. Shakespeare was nothing short of a master adapter: a storyteller who took

a strand from this source, a strand from that, and wove them together into a creation entirely his own. In this respect, *Julius Caesar* is no exception among Shakespeare's works.

Although translations of many classical works were available to Shakespeare, and there are several he may have used to compose *Julius Caesar*, it is certain that his primary source, from which he deviated remarkably little, was Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (called *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* in Shakespeare's time), translated to English by Sir Thomas North in 1579 (from a 1559 French translation). Plutarch was a Greek biographer and essayist born in 45 A.D. in Chaeronea, Greece. His writings faithfully recreate the ancient Greek and Roman world by thoroughly exploring the histories, morals and ethics of second century A.D. personalities. In *Parallel Lives* he compares prominent figures from Greek and Roman history, writing individual sections on two or three different people and then comparing them with one another. Viewing history as a compendium of the deeds of great men, Plutarch was more interested in portraying the characters and ambiguities of these individuals, not just highlighting their effects on the world. Shakespeare compressed the separate chapters dealing with Brutus, Antony and Caesar into his stage play.

Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* closely follows the outline of Plutarch's work. For dramatic purposes, dates are compressed by the playwright: the triumph celebrating victory over Pompey's sons actually occurred in October of 45 B.C., and the Lupercalia was not held until four months later. In Shakespeare's play, the two celebrations occur simultaneously. Between Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March and Antony's tide-turning incitement of the Roman people, Plutarch notes that several days passed in which the Senate—with Antony—pardoned the conspirators. In *Julius Caesar*, the oration of Brutus (not found in Plutarch, incidentally) and of Antony immediately follow Caesar's murder. Shakespeare stages the second battle of Philippi the day after the first battle, when, according to his historical sources, it took place three weeks later.

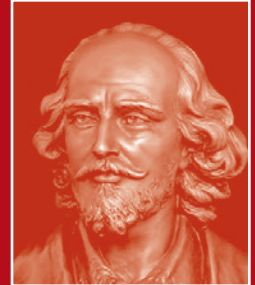
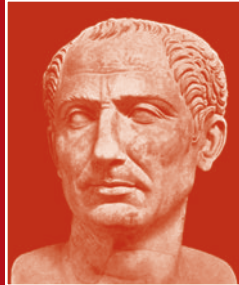
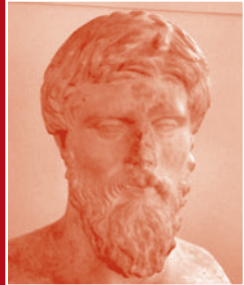
**Stories belonged, in a sense,
to the public, and all reached in to
retell tales with their own personal
spin on the material.**

Shakespeare made other adjustments for the sake of character definition. In *Julius Caesar*, Antony keeps Octavius away after the assassination out of concern for the younger man's safety; Plutarch states that the two were bitter rivals. Brutus's ritual hand-washing in Caesar's blood was also entirely Shakespeare's invention. To Plutarch, Caesar's Ghost was only an unnamed “evil spirit.” Plutarch's Casca is only



CHARACTER STUDIES

Plutarch and Shakespeare describe the key players



Plutarch wrote:

BRUTUS

"Brutus for his virtue and valiantness was well beloved of the people, esteemed of noblemen, and hated of no man, not so much as of his enemies, because he was a marvelous lowly and gentle person, noble minded, and would never yield to any wrong or injustice, the which was the chiefest cause of his fame, and of his rising."

Shakespeare wrote:

BRUTUS

"This was the noblest Roman of them all. / All the conspirators save only he / Did that they did in envy of great Caesar. / He only in a general honest thought / And common good to all made one of them. / His life was gentle and the elements / So mixed in him that Nature might stand up / And say to all the world, 'This was a man.'"

Antony, Act 5, sc. 5

CAESAR

"Now Caesar won many men's good wills at Rome through his eloquence in pleading of their causes; and the people loved him marvelously also, because of the courteous manner he had, and he was very liberal besides; the which indeed did advance him forward, and brought him in estimation with the people."

CAESAR

"Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal: / To every Roman citizen he gives, / To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.... / Moreover, he hath left you all his walks, his private arbors, and newly-planted orchards, / On this side Tiber. He hath left them to you, / And to your heirs forever-common pleasures / To walk abroad and recreate yourselves. / Here was a Caesar! When comes such another?"

Antony, Act 3, sc. 2

ANTONY

"They condemned three hundred of the chiefest citizens of Rome to be put to death by proscription. In my opinion there was never a more horrible, unnatural, and crueler change than this was. And Antonius commanded them to whom he had given commission to kill Cicero... So, when the murderers brought him Cicero's head and hand cut off, he beheld them a long time with great joy and laughed heartily, and that oftentimes, for the great joy he felt."

ANTONY

"These many, then, shall die; their names are / pricked. ...He shall not live; with a spot I damn him. / But, Lepidus, go you to Caesar's house; / Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine / how to cut off some charge in legacies."

Antony, Act 4, sc. 1



mentioned briefly, while in Shakespeare he becomes a fully realized character. For the most part, however, the Rome of Plutarch is the adopted Rome of Shakespeare. We can see these similarities in the two writers' descriptions of the key players. Whatever understanding of Roman values and philosophy Tudor England possessed was largely thanks to Marcus Tullius Cicero. As a well-respected orator, Cicero was one of very few Romans in the Republican period to achieve consular status despite a humble lineage. His Familiar *Epistles* provide a detailed, if biased, record of the last decades of the Republic. Although not translated into English until 1620, his *Epistles* were well known in Latin, and were frequently used to teach writing.

Cicero actively supported Pompey against Caesar. Later he befriended Brutus and Cassius in their fight against Antony and Octavius. He was a staunch Republican, and defended the events of the Ides of March to the end of his life. Cicero did not participate in the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar, and his views on that subject are sketchy at best. He hated Antony, and his extant speeches provide biting evidence of his antipathy. In a letter to Brutus and Cassius, Cicero wrote, "I wish you had invited me to your banquet on the Ides of March; there would have been no leavings." Antony had his revenge: Cicero was among the first to die in the proscriptions of 43 B.C. (see Antony's section above for Plutarch's vivid illustration of Cicero's demise).

The third influential source for *Julius Caesar* was Appian, a native of Alexandria. Born in 95 A.D., Appian worked in the Roman civil service, and later wrote a 24-book version of Roman history. As might be expected from someone with his background in government bureaucracy, the history is colored by pro-Imperial attitudes, but is nonetheless a useful resource. In *The Civil Wars*, translated into English in 1578, Appian provided Shakespeare with a balanced description of Caesar's behavior after the death of Pompey. His work, unlike Cicero's, makes no judgments about the

motives of the conspirators but, like Cicero's, contributes to Shakespeare's portrayal of Antony. Appian's Antony is bold, an excellent liar, subtle and cunning. In his writing, Appian may also have "touched up" Antony's speeches to enhance their dramatic effectiveness, a gesture Shakespeare surely would have appreciated.

Other possible classical sources for Shakespeare's Rome are Suetonius's *De Vita Caesarum*, *The Pharsalia* of Lucan, and Tacitus' *Annals*. Shakespeare may also have drawn inspiration from one of many Renaissance dramas dealing with the life of Caesar, as writing about the lives of noble Romans and Greeks was commonplace during the English Renaissance. Muret wrote a play titled *Julius Caesar* before 1550, and Orlando Pescetti's *Cesare*, published in 1594, contained some parallels to Shakespeare's Caesar.

Each of these source materials would have provided Shakespeare with a unique view of the characters of the men involved. Shakespeare's particular genius was in the adaptation and development of varied sources into a suspenseful, unified whole. Elizabethans strongly identified with the events of the fall of Republican Rome—as Shakespeare was well aware—but in *Julius Caesar* he was to build a city that, complete unto itself, continues to stand regardless of the chameleon-like politics of the advancing ages.

Shakespeare's plays have been compared at times to symphonies that blend many instruments and many themes into a single piece of art. Shakespeare creates his "symphony," his single piece of art, by harmonizing many characters and many different plots into one unified story. He never hesitates to alter a source—even the "facts" of history—to tell the most compelling story. And while his instruments were the characters he borrowed from his sources, his art lives in the poetry that he crafted as no one else could. ✨

**Whatever understanding
of Roman values and
philosophy Tudor England
possessed was largely thanks
to Marcus Tullius Cicero.**



TIMELINE: THE REVOLUTION

60 B.C.

Caesar is elected consul
Caesar, Pompey and Crassus form the
"First Triumvirate"

59 B.C.

Caesar marries Calpurnia
Pompey marries Caesar's daughter Julia
Caesar names Pompey his heir

58 B.C.

Caesar leaves Rome for conquest in Gaul

57 B.C.

Street-fighting in Rome as politics turn violent

55 B.C.

Pompey and Crassus are consuls
Caesar invades Germany and Britain
Caesar publishes his account of the war in Gaul

54 B.C.

Julia dies in childbirth
Violence and unrest in Rome

53 B.C.

Crassus is killed
Consular elections are postponed due to civil unrest

52 B.C.

Martial law declared
Pompey appointed dictator

50 B.C.

Senate orders Caesar and Pompey to resign command over their armies
Pompey raises troops to combat Caesar

49 B.C.

Civil War: Martial law is again declared
Caesar invades Italy; Pompey abandons Rome
Caesar defeats Pompey
The Senate names Caesar dictator and he returns to Rome
Once elected consul he resigns his dictatorship

48 B.C.

Pompey flees to Egypt and is murdered
Caesar secures Cleopatra on the Egyptian throne

47 B.C.

Caesar pardons Brutus and Cassius for siding with Pompey

47-5 B.C.

Caesar fights Pompeians in the East, Africa and Spain

46 B.C.

Caesar's dictatorship is extended for ten years

46-5 B.C.

Pompey's sons renew the war and are defeated

45 B.C.

Caesar completes The Civil War
Caesar is granted the permanent, hereditary title of Imperator (Emperor)
Caesar names Octavian his heir
General amnesty declared for Pompey's partisans

44 B.C.

Caesar is appointed dictator for life
Caesar is assassinated
Senate grants amnesty for the conspirators
Antony's speech at Caesar's funeral causes riots
Brutus and Cassius flee Rome

43 B.C.

Octavius and Antony compete for power in Rome
Octavius, Antony and Lepidus form an uneasy alliance
They march on Rome and take power

42 B.C.

Caesar declared a Roman god by the Senate
Antony and Octavius pursue Brutus and Cassius
The armies meet at Philippi: Cassius commits suicide
Second battle at Philippi: Brutus commits suicide



JULIUS CAESAR: TREASON IN THE HOUSE OF TUDOR



In 1598 Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex, sent a letter to an acquaintance at the royal court in which he queried, "When the vilest of indignities are done unto me, doth religion enforce me to sue? Or doth God require it? Is it impiety not to do it? What, cannot princes err? Cannot subjects receive wrong? Is an earthly power or authority infinite?"

The target of Essex's indignation was Queen Elizabeth I, the most popular Queen England had ever known—and Shakespeare's patroness. The indefinite answer to his speculation, which any citizen of England could have given Essex at the time, was that his sovereign's power was irrefutable, having been bestowed by a Divine magnate. By the light of Elizabeth's court, to have penned such words as Essex did in his letter was a treasonous act.

By 1558 the English penchant for sedition had become something of a national pastime. Sixteenth-century England became the site of an unprecedented number of plots and conspiracies against the Crown. Attempts were reported so frequently and with such blatant incompetence by their plotters that some historians have speculated that the government had even fabricated some of the cases. The participants in these plots were viewed as malcontents, consumed with envy, unable to accept the life God had ordained for them.

Elizabeth's court was awash in the intrigues of partisan politics. In her youth she could curb even the most rebellious with flirtatious encouragement. Later, confronted with an aging monarch still clinging desperately to the illusion of youth and beauty, courtiers found that flattery and backroom bargains were of

ten successful in getting their way with the queen. It was certainly risky business considering that many noblemen's homes were filled with the eyes and ears of their rivals, but the man who controlled the ear of the Queen had all England within his grasp, and few men could resist the lure. Elizabeth recognized their ploys and capitalized on her power over them. She was a hands-on ruler, fully capable of stopping any enterprise short with a word, or merely by refusing to make a decision.

Treason against the Crown was viewed as an act that threatened the very fabric of the established order, human and divine. The punishment for treason or sedition was severe, although not exorbitantly so for the period: hanging, followed by castration and disembowelment, and finally quartering. In order to bring conspiracies to light, agents of the government often used torture—usually the rack—to grind out confessions. Fear of detainment and questioning was often strong enough to turn even the most inveterate plotter into a stool pigeon.

Contributing to the treasonous nature of Englishmen at the time was the Protestant Reformation instigated by Henry VIII's divorce of his Catholic wife, Catherine of Aragon. Thus, Henry VIII broke ties with the Catholic Church and turned Protestantism into the new heralded religion in England. To Catholics, Elizabeth was a contemptuous heretic and an illegitimate child because her Protestant mother, Anne Boleyn, married Henry VIII after his divorce; she was therefore deemed a usurper and unfit to rule. As a Protestant ruler,



THE FAMILY OF HENRY VIII: ALLEGORY OF THE TUDOR SUCCESSION BY LUCAS DE HEERE



Elizabeth was forever in conflict with Europe's Catholic sovereigns and with the papal authorities.

During this time of religious transition, no allowance was made for difference of beliefs. There was no forum for voicing dissenting opinions. Englishmen were forced to believe that as a sovereign, Elizabeth received her ideas through divine inspiration—whichever divinity that might be. To dissent would be disloyal, treasonous—after all, who could quibble with God? In 1580 the government passed legislation requiring all Englishmen to convert to Protestantism, and Catholics were forced to choose between their church and their country. Those who would not adhere to the state's requirements were forced to seek refuge on the Continent, where some lobbied Catholic heads of state to make war on Elizabeth.

Elizabeth I was fully capable of reading between the lines of plays presented at her court, and Shakespeare had to be careful about his portrayal of the aging Roman ruler Caesar—a pompous tyrant, susceptible to flattery, and unwilling to acknowledge his own failings or his ability to be in danger. Even a hint of an analogy drawn between the two rulers could have been perceived as treasonous to the Queen, his patroness. Presented in 1599 when Elizabeth was sixty-six, the play must have been a fascinating study for her.

Her favorite at court, Essex, had only written the letter quoted above the year before, and in another year he was to lead a group of armed men to the very door of her bedchamber. Like Caesar, she witnessed the unreliable nature of those in whom she placed her confidence and affections. Unlike Caesar, she outlived their conspiracy. ✚

ET TU, BRUTE? BRUTUS AND THE REPUBLIC



Brutus the Hero?

Most critics believe that Brutus's character was a precursor to the tortured Danish prince depicted in *Hamlet*, written approximately one year later. As in *Hamlet*'s case, there has been an extensive debate regarding the character of the man in question. Was Brutus the liberator of his people or the cold-

blooded murderer of their chosen ruler? A noble patriot/philosopher or a deluded liberal? Every age has answered the question in its own way, according to changing attitudes about morality, patriotism and liberty.

When the play was written in 1599, England was ruled by the charismatic and politically adept Elizabeth I. Elizabeth was well known for being infamously capricious, choosing favorites, and having a well-informed secret police force. Her family, the Tudors, rescued England from the brink of civil war and initiated an era of unrivalled prosperity.

Although Shakespeare's company was supported by the Crown, he still chose to portray Brutus—a republican and assassin—as his source, Plutarch, saw him 1,500 years before him: as a patriot whose ideals lead him to destroy the very things he holds dear. Caesar was commonly portrayed as a heroic figure in English literature of the period (in the Middle Ages, Caesar was even depicted as son of the fairy king Oberon), but Shakespeare's Caesar is aging, pompous—and at best a challenging character with whom to sympathize. *Julius Caesar* depicts a despot with a deaf ear, epileptic fits and a superstitious apprehension of weather patterns—hardly a traditionally heroic figure, but a very human one. Bernard Shaw wrote of Caesar,

It is impossible for even the most judicially minded critic to look without a revulsion of indignant contempt at this travestying of a great man as a silly braggart, whilst the pitiful gang of mischief makers who destroyed him are lauded as statesmen and patriots. There is not a single sentence uttered by Shakespeare's Julius Caesar that is worthy of him...

—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, 1898

Why would Shakespeare make the conventional portrayal of protagonist and antagonist more complex? Shakespeare gives us enough reason to sway our empathy toward either Brutus or Caesar. Indeed, while Brutus is depicted as the “noblest Roman of them all” (Act 5, sc. 5), Shakespeare coaxes our sympathies in Caesar's favor as an aging, physically infirm leader who is murdered in cold blood by one he



deeply trusted. Caesar's relative few lines, uncharacteristic of a man respected as a skilled orator and writer by his contemporaries, does not give us a clear depiction of his moral character, which one might expect Shakespeare to have given to his titular character. Rather, Shakespeare leaves the bulk of plot development to Brutus, and later, to Antony. Indeed, Caesar is dead before the close of Act 3. Why would the dramatist still choose to name this play after him?

One possible answer may be that Shakespeare was dramatizing the debate itself. Who is the hero of this play? Who was the hero of history? Who was right, if anyone? No easy answers are offered up. It is the relatively even weight each side holds with respect to innocence and guilt that makes this play a true tragedy. Although Shakespeare portrays Brutus sympathetically, we never see any real proof that Brutus is right in his doubts about Caesar. In fact, we know a mutual love exists between the two men. Brutus says at Caesar's funeral, "With this, I depart: that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself when it shall please my country to need my death." (Act 3, sc. 2) Shakespeare makes sure we know that Brutus has despaired in provoking the death of his friend and the supposed freedom of his state. However we have only Brutus's word on his motives. We have no reason to doubt him, but while the characters may describe events as they see them, their views are as subjective as each of our own must be. Brutus is certainly no perfect, nobly wooden hero. The "heroes" of this play are distinctly, humanly flawed. To fully understand the debate, simplified by the author in his drama, it is necessary to examine the world in which these men lived and worked.

Brutus the Idealist

The Roman Republic was nearly five hundred years old when Julius Caesar died on the cold marble of the Senate House floor. The monarchy preceding it had been overthrown in 510 BC—by a man some believed to be an ancestor of Shakespeare's Marcus Brutus. For generations, a citizen's dignity and success had been defined in terms of service rendered to the State. Many of Brutus's contemporaries believed that this and other morals of Rome were being corrupted by the addition of new territories and their accompanying wealth. In the rush to add to their personal prestige, many statesmen had begun to place their own gain before the Republic's good. It is easy to see why Brutus and the conspirators would find Caesar the ultimate threat to the Republic; it could not survive if its citizens believed their personal achievements placed them beyond the reach of the law.

Although Brutus believed that in killing Caesar, he was defending the freedom of all Romans, this was not necessarily true. For the Roman Republic was not a democracy, but an oligarchy. Webster's defines an oligarchy as "government by a few, especially by a small group or class." In Rome, the governing body, the Senate, was composed of men of the upper classes who had reached a certain age. Women, slaves and foreigners had no voting rights. Prisoners of war often became the slaves of their captors, and could not vote or become citizens until freed or until their master's death, a hotly debated topic in Republican Rome.

For the majority of the people living in Rome—whether citizens, women, slaves or foreigners—the difference between the Republican government and Caesar's dictatorship was not that great, although the Republic did provide them greater legal defenses.

On the other hand, Caesar's triumph had the benefit of calming the instability of Civil War years. The strictly hierarchal structure of Roman society leads us to believe that Brutus was not only fatally unaware of the inequities of the system

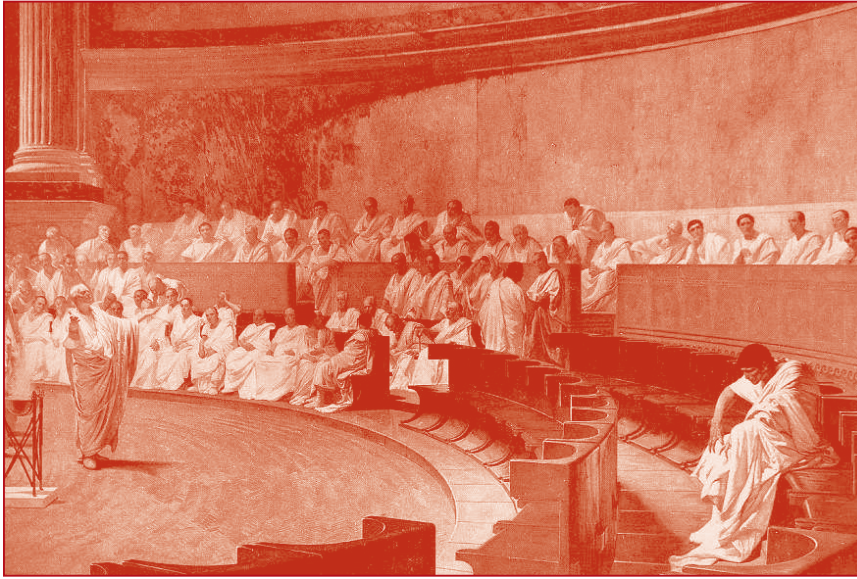
he defended, but also that he had no idea what would actually appeal to the citizens of Rome. To Brutus and his compatriots the hierarchy of society and government had become both a social and a moral imperative. Determining who held the reins of power had become so entrenched that change implied not only a corruption of the system but also the corruption of society.

Brutus's Republic

Roman society was set up hierarchically. Citizens were grouped into classes and voted based on the amount of property they owned. If one could work to own more property, he could theoretically work his way "up the ladder" of society. By projecting this ideal, the Roman government gave those whose votes were not equally weighted (mainly its lower class and its occupied lands) some sense of participation, and thereby resentment was meant to be kept to a minimum.

However the strategic organization of public voting ensured that some men's votes had more weight than others, and therefore power remained in the upper class. The consensus of each "century" was held as a single vote for or against a potential magistrate, or person of political power. Of the 193 so-called centuries, a candidate needed only half to obtain his governmental position. But the voting process ensured that the top two classes, privileged to vote first, made up just over half the votes of the citizens. In theory, if all the centuries in these classes voted the same, they could control the outcome

The urban poor, known as the plebians, who figure so prominently in *Julius Caesar*, had relatively little say in government.



REPRESENTATION OF THE ROMAN SENATE: CICERO ATTACKS CATILINA, FROM A 19TH CENTURY FRESCO IN PALAZZO MADAMA, ROME.

of elections before the lower classes even voted. Thus, the urban poor, known as the plebians, who figure so prominently in *Julius Caesar*, had relatively little say in government. The patrician upper class also controlled the voting process through the elaborate Roman system of clientship. Plebian families who participated in this social relationship tied their fortunes to the patronage of an influential man or men in exchange for some form of protection, be it financial, lawful, etc. The political influence of the patron patricians was so strong that it often determined the outcome of many plebian votes, making it harder for the plebian classes' vote to make an impact.

The Republican government was headed by two consuls, elected annually. Those elected to the position usually came from consular families, families that had supplied the government with consuls in the past. Ex-consuls carried much influence in Senate deliberations and were prime candidates for gubernatorial positions in Rome's newly acquired and wealthy provinces.

These consuls were to be consistently advised by the Senate, an advisory council of mostly patricians. Its formal jurisdiction was the control of finance and security, the administration of Italy, and the maintenance of relations with foreign powers. Election to senatorial position was hereditary and permanent, although it could be revoked in cases of grave misbehavior. The elected tended to be patricians because of their ancient lineages and long traditions of patronage. Thus, if a man's father or grandfather weren't a senator, he likely would not be, either. Even if he were successful in reaching the Senate, if his ancestors hadn't held high office, he, too, was unlikely to do so. A notable exception was the great orator Cicero, who was

the first man in his family to attain senatorial, and later consular, rank.

The omnipotent position of dictator was designed to be a temporary measure. It was filled by someone, usually a military general, whom the public believed could restore peace in times of extremity. He assumed the powers of the consuls and was trusted to make decisions on his own terms for the good of the people. His reign was meant to last only until new consular elections could be held. This period of governmental limbo was called an interregnum. Dictators were rarely appointed or necessary, prompting Brutus and his conspirators' concern and apprehension; Caesar's appointment to a life-long dictatorship was without precedent in the history of the Republic.

The next most influential position to hold in government was that of praetor. In *Julius Caesar*, Cassius tells Cinna to lay letters

for Brutus "in the praetor's chair." Eight praetors were elected annually to preside over matters of law. The praetorship was a prerequisite for attaining a consulship, but was nearly as closed to non-senatorial families as was consulship. Four aediles were also elected annually. These positions carried less weight than either the consulship or praetorship; they were filled by men who were unable to vie for a praetorship and who sometimes used them as a steppingstone to power.

Ten tribunes were elected strictly by the plebeians per year. Traditionally, Romans of patrician blood were barred from this office. Its domain was the protection of commoners from irresponsible uses of power by magistrates. A tribune's person was sacred, and killing one was a crime punishable by death. Members of the tribunate were notorious for instituting liberal political practices and legislation. In *Julius Caesar*, Marcellus and Flavius are tribunes whose sway over the Roman populace is obvious in Act 1 sc. 1.

The lowest level of magistracy was the questorship. Since the presiding magistrate's allocation of speaking time in the Senate favored those with higher positions, these men rarely were given the opportunity to voice their opinions.

It was this system of government that Brutus fought to protect. Although he and Cassius believed their cause to be in the best interests of Rome, their Rome was comprised of a very limited social and political circle. The man on the street valued the peace of a dictatorship above a Republican civil war. Antony's speeches inflamed an audience tired and bloodied from frequent changes in government and violent purges. ❖



IN STATES UNBORN

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Never mind that fleeting reference to Bermuda in *The Tempest*: Shakespeare's American play is *Julius Caesar*. Admittedly, the United States didn't exist when Shakespeare wrote it, but the long process by which at least part of the English-speaking world would eventually become a republic was already under way. And when we hear

Cassius imagining the states unborn and accents yet unknown in which the killing of Caesar will continue to be enacted in the distant future, it is hard not to feel that Shakespeare was being even more prescient than usual.

By 1599, when Shakespeare wrote *Julius Caesar*, Elizabeth I had been queen for over forty years, and there was still no obvious heir apparent. Shakespeare, meanwhile, had just composed what would be the last of his plays about the English crown, *Henry V*, which concludes with the Chorus remarking that its hero's successes all come to nothing when the throne, thanks to a mere accident of heredity, passes to his politically incompetent son Henry VI. According to Shakespeare's history plays, monarchical rule is usually a recipe for civil strife and succession crises, and when the playwright turned to the subject matter of the Roman state instead he was not the only person looking for alternatives in the classical past. The Earl of Essex, for instance, a close associate of Shakespeare's patron the Earl of Southampton, was showing a conspicuous interest in the Roman republic and empire—and within two years he would attempt a coup d'état against Elizabeth.

Little more than thirty years after Shakespeare's death a much more successful attempt at drastic constitutional change took place with the execution in 1649 of Charles I—a king whom some of the parliamentarians who deposed him called “Caesar,” styling themselves as “Senators.” The ensuing English republic collapsed only a decade later, but the dream of a more rational constitution, based on the models espoused by the likes of Cicero and Cassius, lived on, nourished in part by the continuing currency of Shakespeare's play. Again flattering parliamentarians by the title of their ancient Roman counterparts, the theater critic Francis Gentleman wrote in 1773 that *Julius Caesar* should be made their official text:

We wish that our senators, as a body, were to bespeak it annually; that each would get most of it by heart; that it should be occasionally performed at both universities, and at every public seminary, of every consequence; so would the author receive distinguished, well-earned honour; and the public reap, we doubt not, essential service.

Preserving the ideals of Shakespeare's *Brutus* among MPs and at the elite schools and universities that educated them, though, was all very well for Shakespeare's reputation among the British establishment, though it seemed unlikely to transform the state. But in the same year another, rather pithier text appeared that sought to take the play's republicanism back onto the streets. Not the streets of London, however, but those of a city farther west whose attachment to this play, in some quarters at least, was rather more militant. A 1773 broadside addressed to the citizens of Boston, Massachusetts, rallying the people against unfair taxes and unrepresentative government as it announces the arrival of certain ships bearing cargoes of ill-fated tea, begins with a familiar rhetorical formula: “Friends, brethren, countrymen...!”

Julius Caesar, then, was part of the American Republic from its very inception. And as the United States set about designing its neoclassical constitution and the gargantuan neo-Roman buildings that would give it palpable form, this drama of political aspiration and ambition continued to settle into the American psyche. In 1787 Philadelphia, Peter Markoe hailed *Julius Caesar* as Shakespeare's masterpiece, proof that this freedom-loving author now belonged to the States:

*Monopolizing Britain! boast no more
His genius to your narrow bounds confin'd;
Shakespeare's bold spirit seeks our western shore,
A general blessing for the world design'd,
And, emulous to form the rising age,
The noblest Bard demands the noblest Stage.*

***Julius Caesar, then,
was part of the American Republic
from its very inception.***

If Markoe's country has indeed inherited the political ideals that animate this play's conspirators, it has also inherited the irreconcilable conflicts that provoke its violence. Like Caesar, certain

US presidents have been seen by some as the Constitution's illegitimate and tyrannical masters rather than its servants: Abraham Lincoln, most famously, was killed by an assassin, John Wilkes Booth, who as well as being a supporter of one of Rome's less appealing institutions—slavery—was an actor whose favorite role was that of Brutus. In a country perpetually in danger of becoming an empire too large for real democracy, whose (overwhelmingly male) leaders transact their business and enact their rivalries between the Capitol and the Senate, *Julius Caesar*, for better and for worse, is always going to look right at home. The elections may happen in November, but presidents should still keep a lookout for the Ides of March. ☆



LOVE, PARTICULAR AND GENERAL

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Julius Caesar shows us two different kinds of love, in tragic opposition. Although it would be easy to see Brutus as a cold man who acts on principle, Shakespeare repeatedly emphasizes his intense compassion for Rome and all Romans, threatened with bondage by a charismatic and unprincipled populist tyrant. Brutus

tells us that one strong emotion has driven out another emotion (personal love of Caesar), as fire drives out fire. He appeals to the emotions all Romans have, he thinks, for their threatened republican form of government. He addresses them as “countrymen and lovers,” summoning them to love of country and hatred of oppression. Reason and love are not at odds for him, because he intensely loves the causes that he also thinks rational argument can justify. He expects all Romans to be like him: deliberative citizens, who value liberty with both their judgment and their hearts. (Were Antony Caesar’s own son, Brutus says earlier, the conspirators’ compelling moral arguments should satisfy him.) Shakespeare gives him prose not poetry at this crucial moment, but a passionate rhythmic prose, the language of general compassion.

Shakespeare’s sources, the ancient authors Plutarch and Suetonius, support this picture of Brutus as a man of philosophical principle, whose motives in leading the plot against Caesar were untainted by personal grievance or envy. The author of well-known books on virtue and duty, he really was the moral philosopher putting his ideas into practice. Brutus was not a Stoic, as he is often said to be, but a Platonist; he auditioned possible conspirators by asking them whether civil war was preferable to “lawless monarchy”—

Plato’s technical designation of the worst possible regime. Shakespeare suppressed the one bit of personal gossip the sources do mention, the possibility that Brutus may have been Caesar’s natural son. According to Suetonius, Caesar’s last words were, in Greek, “You too, my child” (kai su, teknon)—in place of which Shakespeare gives us “Et tu Brute,” “You too, Brutus,” a reminder of personal friendship rather than of kinship.

Brutus’s antitype is Antony, the dissolute and unprincipled, who can understand no kind of love other than the personal, who cannot refrain from calling the dead man “Julius” even in the presence of the conspirators, and whose “O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth” spills out over this world of philosophically moralized emotion like a red stain. For him, the Servant gives proof of a “big heart” only by being dumbstruck at the sight of Caesar’s corpse. Antony can understand that Brutus is honorable and fine; Brutus’s type of passionate love he cannot grasp. In one sense Antony’s heart is large; in another, it is pinched and small.

Julius Caesar is the play’s dramatic center because he is the focal point of this collision of loves—the charismatic object of Antony’s and the people’s devotion, the merely personal love against which Brutus must fortify himself in pursuit of his passion for justice. As in the sources, Caesar is a populist tyrant, who loved the people and took bold steps

to improve their economic circumstances, but at the price of political liberty. Daring commander, epileptic, erudite author, statesman who more than anyone might have saved the Roman Republic had he not loved

glory more—these contradictory aspects of the man are indelibly etched in Shakespeare’s spare portrait.

The citizens of Rome resemble Antony, not Brutus, in their loves. That is Brutus’s tragedy, and theirs, and Rome’s. The play poses one of the darkest questions of political life: can Brutus’s type of love ever motivate masses of people or determine the course of events? And, if it cannot, what lies in store for human freedom? ✚

**The citizens of Rome resemble
Antony, not Brutus, in their loves.
That is Brutus’s tragedy,
and theirs, and Rome’s.**



POLITICS AS USUAL?

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Is murder for political reasons ever justified? In *Julius Caesar* Shakespeare asks us to think about this, and a lot of other questions about politics, violence, friendship, loyalty, and revenge.

The first thing Shakespeare does is set the scene. When the play opens, the people of Rome are celebrating because Caesar has just had a big

victory over his opponent, Pompey. The two tribunes recall that Pompey had done good things for the people in the past. Caesar orders the tribunes killed when he learns they criticized him (Act 1, Scene 2). What should one do in such a case? Is this just politics as usual or is this something worse: an attempt to deprive us of our right to elect our own representatives? And if the latter, would violence be justified?

Against this background how does Shakespeare depict Caesar? With only one exception, we see Caesar always surrounded by other public figures, chiefly members of the Senate. What can we say about him and his political intentions based on the way he relates to these men? How does what he says and does relate to his treatment of the tribunes? Do we see anything in his behavior that could possibly justify such extreme action as his assassination?

Now consider the man who seems to instigate the plot—Cassius. What are we to think of his motives in view of what he says about Caesar? He doesn't seem to care about Caesar depriving the people of their freedom, if that's what Caesar is doing. Rather, Cassius seems to be concerned with Caesar's reputation—and his own. Is his concern for reputation and office?

Brutus seems different from Cassius. All, even his enemies, think him a noble man. It is for this reason, in fact, that Cassius needs him. Brutus' participation gives his plot legitimacy. To draw a contemporary parallel, there was a lot of talk in the 1996 election about Colin Powell running for President. Powell decided against it on personal grounds, but one can see that those people who were urging him to run were like Cas-

sius: they needed Powell to give their platform greater popular credit. In attempting to convince Powell to run, they spoke of duty, but weren't they also perhaps appealing to Powell's ego? And doesn't Cassius do the same thing with Brutus? Is Brutus, like Cassius, concerned about reputation? And if so, does this make him less critical of Cassius's efforts to turn him against Caesar? Brutus does, finally, join the plot. But does he do it for egoistic reasons or for a genuine concern for the common good? These are all questions that history and Shakespeare's retelling of this story raise. It is up to us as readers and audience to wrestle with a range of possible answers.

Cassius's attempt to enlist Brutus in his plot raises a question about friendship. Cassius claims to be Brutus' friend. But even if Cassius had the best motives in the world, is this the way to treat a friend, to attempt to sway him by playing upon less than honorable motives? Do true friends ever act out of self-serving motives? Yet the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius in Brutus' tent on the battlefield suggests that Cassius's affection for Brutus is genuine. Cassius seems truly hurt that Brutus appears so cold to him and is very desirous for personal rather than military reasons to make peace between them. What does the relation of Cassius and Brutus say about the nature of friendship and, still more thorny, about the relation between friendship and politics?

Questions of friendship, of the place of trust and loyalty in our relations, occur again and again in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Naturally once he joins the conspiracy, Brutus has to keep the plot secret: the fewest number of people should know about it. But Brutus tells his wife Portia. Was this wise?

Does a man owe this kind of trust to his wife? Would it have been better to shield her from all knowledge of the conspiracy? On the day of the assassination, we see Portia under terrible stress because of her knowledge of the plot. Later, we hear

that she took her own life. Might this possibly be due to her involvement, even though it was not immediate?

Caesar and Brutus are friends. Antony comments on how close Brutus and Caesar were. One of the most famous lines in the play is when Brutus stabs Caesar and Caesar, seeing this, asks, "Et tu, Brute?" that is, "And you, Brutus?" Even if Caesar were doing wrong, should Brutus, his friend, be the one to kill him? Does patriotism justify personal treachery as well as murder? Or does Brutus's willingness to put his friendship aside, to expose himself to the charge of being a false friend, show real courage?

**Questions of friendship,
of the place of trust and loyalty
in our relations, occur again
and again**



Antony's friendship for Caesar appears deeply felt. Alone with the body of his murdered friend, he seems moved by profound grief. In pursuit of revenge upon the killers of his friend, Antony whips the mob into a frenzy so that they riot and kill innocent people. Remember the riots in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict a couple of years ago. Even if one thought the verdict was wrong, is this the way to respond? Granted that Caesar was a friend, aren't there limits to what we should do when someone harms our friend? Is it all right to take revenge no matter what the consequences?

After the conspirators have fled we see Antony with his allies Lepidus and Octavius casually, cold-bloodedly putting down the names of political enemies who are to be eliminated. When Lepidus leaves, Antony tells Octavius that he is only using Lepidus for his own purposes. The three appear like gangsters dividing the loot and planning to betray each other in the future. Did Antony act against the conspirators to revenge injustice or for other, more self-serving purposes?

At the end of the play Antony and Octavius defeat the army of Cassius and Brutus and the two principal conspirators die by their own hands. In some sense, their plot is a failure. They succeed in killing Caesar but insofar as they sought to be Caesar's successors as the most important figures in Roman politics, they failed. That role will go to Antony and Octavius. What

does Shakespeare want us to think of this failure? Shakespeare couldn't change the way things turned out: his audience knew that this is what happened historically. But does Shakespeare indicate why he thinks it turned out this way?

**We are back again to
our first question—
whether political murder
can ever be justified.**

We are back again to our first question—whether political murder can ever be justified. Does Shakespeare intend his audience to draw the moral that assassination is always wrong and that violence in politics leads to failure? But Antony is successful with the violence he stirs up. Does Shakespeare want us to think

that killing Caesar was wrong but revenging his death was right? But at the play's end Antony himself offers this memorable praise of Brutus, that he was "the noblest Roman of them all." Is this a tragedy of the failure of a noble man, compelled to use ignoble ends?

Finally, we should consider how all these questions relate to each other. They all seem to fall under one of two categories, politics or friendship. In each case we are asked to reflect on right and wrong. What do we owe our friends? What do we owe our fellow citizens? And how do we balance their competing claims against each other—and against the legitimate claims of our own egos? Adjusting these claims is never easy. Perhaps tragedy is best defined as the situation where there is no good solution. ✪



DEATH OF CAESAR BY VINCENZO CAMUCCINI



...ON HISTORY AND PLOT

0-200 AD

Againe, of signes in the elements, the great comet which seven nightes together was seene very bright after Caesar's death, the eight night after was never seene more. Also the brightness of the sunne was darckned...and shined not out... therefor the ayer being very cloudy and darke, by the weakness of the heate that could not come foorth, did cause the earth to bring foorth but raw and unrype frute, which rotted before it could rype.

—PLUTARCH, HISTORIAN, 46-120 AD (SIR THOMAS NORTH'S TRANSLATION)

1500s

After dinner on the 21st of September, at about two o'clock, I went with my companions over the water, and in the strewn roof-house saw the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius with at least fifteen characters very well acted.

—THOMAS PLATTER, SCHOLAR, 1599

1600s

I remember, the Players have often mentioned it as an honor to Shakespeare, that in his writing, (whatsoever he penn'd) hee never blotted out line. My answer hath beene, would he had blotted a thousand.... His wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too.

—BEN JONSON, PLAYWRIGHT, 1637

I confess I cou'd never get a true account of [Shakespeare's] Learning, and am apt to think it more than Common Report allows him. I am sure he never touches on a Roman Story but the Persons, the Passages, the Manners, the Circumstances, the Ceremonies, all are Roman.

—NAHUM TATE, POET, 1680

In [Othello, Shakespeare] might be bolder, the persons being all his own creatures, and meer fiction. But [in Julius Caesar] he sins not against Nature and Philosophy only, but against the memory of the Noblest Romans, that ought to be sacred to all Posterity.

—THOMAS RYMER, HISTORIOGRAPHER, 1692

1800s

For surely...nothing can seem more discordant with our historical preconceptions of Brutus, or more lowering to the intellect of this Stoic-Platonic tyrannicide, than...that he would have no objection to a king, or to Caesar, a monarch in Rome, would Caesar be as good a monarch as he now seems disposed to be.

—SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, LITERARY CRITIC, 1834

But what can justify apparitions and spirits in an historical drama? Is it not a mere claptrap for the gallery?...[Brutus] was the very soul of the conspiracy: if his mental energies should be paralyzed... the whole enterprise must fail. And so in truth it went to pieces, because it was against the will of history—i.e. against the will of God. It was to signify this great lesson that Shakespeare introduced the ghost upon the stage."

—HERMANN ULRICI, PHILOSOPHER, 1839

The poet, if he intended to make the attempt of the republicans his main theme, could not have ventured to create too great an interest in Caesar; it was necessary to keep him in the background to present that view of him which gave a reason for the conspiracy.

—G.G. GERVINUS, HISTORIAN, 1849-50

At Her Majesty's, it is not the historic band of conspirators that strikes the key note of the play. It is not even the mighty figure of Caesar treacherously brought low. It is the feverish pulsing life of the city.

—PROGRAM NOTE, HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE PRODUCTION, 1898

1900s

It is really Caesar's presence...that dominates the story. Brutus is first among the struggling mortals who obey him even while resisting their fate, but the fate itself is the imperialist inspiration which makes up the significance of Caesar, and the play therefore is fitly named after him.

—M.W. MACCALLUM, AUTHOR, 1910



**1900s
continued**

Caesar, then, as seen in *Plutarch*, or, indeed, as known to us from any source, would not do for the hero of a tragedy; he towered above the world so far that he left no dramatic incidents for the world to contemplate.

—WILLIAM WARDE FOWLER, HISTORIAN, 1910

The course of civilization is determined, and in Julius Caesar, mainly determined, by factors independent of a ruler's personality. Caesar the man and Caesar the politician are written down to zero in order that mightier and utterly impersonal forces may be shown in operation...

—H.B. CHARLTON, SCHOLAR, 1929

[Shakespeare] had a technical reason of special weight for disparaging Caesar while still alive, namely, that his assassination scene was an extraordinarily difficult corner for an Elizabethan playwright to turn. Caesar was not a crowned head...But he was "the first emperor," and to the Elizabethans...a being of almost superhuman stature, so that the spectacle of his being hacked to pieces by assassins would inevitably strike them as something appalling, if not sacrilegious.

—JOHN DOVER WILSON, SCHOLAR, 1948

The Gaius Julius who fell in the Curia Pompeiana on the Ides of March, 44 B.C., was a "particular" man over whose character and schemes historians will continue to dispute; the Caesar who falls in Shakespeare's Capitol is the universal Dictator.

—JOHN DOVER WILSON, SCHOLAR, 1948

The pride of Brutus is the ghost of Caesar within him as certainly as if at the moment Caesar expired it had literally transmigrated from the dead man to the living one. And so this Tragedy of Brutus is the story of Julius Caesar's spirit after death. The title of the play is precisely the right one.

—HAROLD C. GODDARD, SCHOLAR, 1951

Whoever is aware of the disparity between what he would be and what the world seems bent on making him is a Brutus in a general sense.

—HAROLD C. GODDARD, SCHOLAR, 1951

Bernard Shaw once remarked that Julius Caesar glorifies a murder which Goethe described as 'the most senseless of deeds.' A queer way of glorifying it: to demonstrate that it brought on its perpetrators precisely what they committed it to avert. No, Shakespeare agreed with Goethe. The path of violence and the path of the violent opposition to violence can easily be the same. 'And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far / Ancestral voices prophesying war!' The real opposition, Shakespeare seems to say, is not between the state and the enemies of the state. It is between those ancestral voices and the voice of the soul.

—HAROLD C. GODDARD, SCHOLAR, 1951

In 44 B.C., there was a built-in ambivalence in the popular Roman mind about the real meaning and significance of its rituals and traditions. The old Roman sense of time-honored tradition was already lost, perverted to human rather than divine homage. It was at that year's Lupercal that Caesar changed the nature of the festival's observance by adding a new group of priestly celebrants bearing his name...and appointed Antony as its leader. This act in turn created the occasion for Antony to offer him the laurel crown... Cassius' complaint that "this man/ Is now become a god" was entirely justified.

—NAOMI CONN LIEBLER, SCHOLAR, 1981

Perhaps Shakespeare's politics did inhibit his profoundest powers in Julius Caesar. The tragedy of Brutus and the crime against the monarch could not be reconciled with one another, and Shakespeare, divided against himself, found he could not be wholly true to Brutus.

—HAROLD BLOOM, SCHOLAR, 1988

...all the conspirators can do is kill Caesar; they have nothing to put in his place but slogans; their cries of 'liberty' and 'freedom' are themselves part of a dead political language in a Rome that has got used to idolizing great men and has lost the political will that makes freedom a reality.

—ALEXANDER LEGGATT, SCHOLAR, 1990



WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

**1900s
continued**

As their world collapses around them, they need each other as never before, and any hint of betrayal hurts deeply. Shakespeare's understanding of a society in crisis includes not just the political issues, the slogans, the violence of riot and battle; it includes the private dramas that are played out in the midst of great events, shaping those events and being shaped by them. This may be one reason why we still recognize Shakespeare's portrayal of a long-dead world: he sees the drama acted out not by abstract historical forces but by people.

—ALEXANDER LEGGATT, SCHOLAR, 1990

The republican ideal that Cassius evokes to seduce Brutus into opposing Caesar, and that Brutus uses to justify murder, is closer to myth than to history.

—COPPELIA KAHN, PROFESSOR, 1992

2000s

Abraham Lincoln, after emancipating the slaves, observed he had defeated the fear of death by entering the memory of future generations. They all wanted this—Caesar and Brutus and Cassius, Churchill and Lincoln, Lyndon Johnson and John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy. And they all received some measure of what they wanted.

—RICHARD GOODWIN, SPEECH WRITER, 2000

Shakespeare has character after character in Julius Caesar reject social expectations and open an alternative way of being, in which bleeding bodies are penetrated by already bloody swords.

—DANIEL JUAN GIL, AUTHOR, 2007

...ON CHARACTER

0-200 AD

Caesar died at the age of 56, surviving Pompey by not much more than four years. All his life he ran such great risks pursuing, and finally attaining, power and rule, but he reaped from them no fruit but only the name and an invidious fame among the citizens. Still, his great genius that had watched over him all his life followed him after death as an avenger of his murder, driving and tracking down his slayers over land and sea till no one of them was left, and pursuing any who had a hand in the deed or participated in the plot.

—PLUTARCH, HISTORIAN, 46-120 AD

Brutus for his virtue and valiantness was well-beloved of the people, esteemed of noblemen, and hated of no man, not so much as his enemies, because he was a marvelous lowly and gentle person, noble minded, and would never yield to any wrong or injustice, the which was the chiefest cause of his fame, and of his rising.

—PLUTARCH, HISTORIAN, 46-120 AD

So, when the murderers brought [Antony] Cicero's head and hand cut off, he beheld them a long time with great joy and laughed heartily...Then, when he had taken his pleasure of the sight of them, he caused them to be set up in an open place, over the pulpit for orations, showing himself...a cruel man and unworthy of the office and authority he bore.

—PLUTARCH, HISTORIAN, 46-120 AD

[Caesar] is generally described as having been tall, fair-complexioned, shapely of limb, and rather full in the face with lively dark eyes. He enjoyed good health, except that toward the end he was subject to fainting spells and nightmares. Twice during his campaigns he suffered epileptic fits. He was rather fastidious in the care of his person...He was also chagrined by his baldness...That is why he adopted the habit of combing what hair he had left forward from the crown of his head, and of all the honors voted him by the Senate and people there was none he received and made use of more gladly than the privilege of wearing a laurel wreath at all times and places.

—SUETONIUS, HISTORIAN, 93-138 AD



1500s *Questionless, the Romans should not have nourished this lion [Caesar] in their city, or being nourished, they should not have disgraced him.*

—WILLIAM FULBECKE, PLAYWRIGHT, 1586

1600s *So have I seene, when Caesar would appeare,
And on the Stage at halfe-sword parley were,
Brutus and Cassius: oh, how the Audience
Were ravish'd, with what wonder they went thence.*

—LEONARD DIGGES, POET, 1640

1700s *Surely I may be permitted to inquire, in what consisted the divine virtue of Brutus?... Neither as a statesman nor as a general did Brutus ever approve himself equal to the arduous task he had so rashly undertaken, of restoring the commonwealth; instead of restoring it, the death of a mild and generous usurper produced only a series of civil wars, and the reign of three tyrants whose union and whose discord were alike fatal to the Roman people...The monarch and the patriot are alike amenable to the severe but candid inquisition of truth.*

—EDWARD GIBBON, HISTORIAN, 1765-66

Our, author... shows great judgement in taking various opportunities to display the softness and gentleness in Brutus...for one cannot conceive, that he...would from malice or cruelty, have cut short the important and illustrious course of Caesar's life.

—ELIZABETH MONTAGU, CRITIC, 1769

The art of Marc Antony is skillfully unfolded; his oration over the dead body of Caesar is such a masterpiece of eloquence as is not to be matched in any play, ancient or modern.

—THOMAS DAVIES, AUTHOR, 1784

1800s *The amiable beauty of [Brutus], his feeling, and patriotic heroism, are portrayed with peculiar care. Yet the poet has pointed out with great nicety the superiority of Cassius over Brutus in independent volition and discernment in judging of human affairs; that the latter...is unfit to be the head of a party in a state entirely corrupted; and that these very faults give an unfortunate turn to the cause of the conspirators.*

—AUGUST WILHELM SCHLEGEL, SCHOLAR, 1811

Caesar's shade is more powerful to avenge his fall than he himself was to guard against it.

—AUGUST WILHELM SCHLEGEL, SCHOLAR, 1811

We do not much admire the representation here given of Julius Caesar, nor do we think it answers to the portrait given of him in his Commentaries. He makes several vapouring and rather pedantic speeches, and does nothing. Indeed, he has nothing to do. So far, the fault of the character is the fault of the plot.

—WILLIAM HAZLITT, SCHOLAR, 1817

1900s *Shakespear (sic), who knew human weakness so well, never knew human strength of the Caesarian type. His Caesar is an admitted failure...Caesar was not in Shakespear, nor in the epoch, now fast waning, which he inaugurated. It cost Shakespear nothing to write Caesar down for the merely technical purpose of writing Brutus up.*

—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, PLAYWRIGHT, 1900

Brutus, murdering from philosophy, stands for the revulsion of humanity against the superman, who, when you get him out of the circumstance of war into that of peace, and out of the medieval atmosphere into that of a free community, becomes revealed for nothing else than what he is—plain tyrant.

—E.K. CHAMBERS, SCHOLAR, 1906

And here comes the irony of the play, that after all, it is Cassius, and not the idealist Brutus, who might, if the opportunity had been his, have brought to the conspiracy just that element of efficiency which was needed to turn it into a triumphant revolution.

—E.K. CHAMBERS, SCHOLAR, 1906



WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

1900s
continued

Between this Brutus and this Antony a plain issue is set. It is righteousness matched against efficiency and showing itself clearly impotent in the unequal contest...They stand for spiritual forces, and in the spiritual order the triumph of efficiency over righteousness is tragic stuff.

—E.K. CHAMBERS, SCHOLAR, 1906

[The mob represents] the hoodlum element you find in any big city after a war, a mob that is without the stuff that makes them intelligently alive, a lynching mob, the kind of mob that gives you a Hitler or a Mussolini.

—ORSON WELLES, PRODUCER, 1937

[Brutus is] the classical picture of the eternal, impotent, ineffectual, fumbling liberal...He's dead right all the time and dead at the final curtain...He's the bourgeois intellectual, who, under a modern dictatorship would be the first to be put up against a wall and shot.

—ORSON WELLES, PRODUCER, 1937

Shakespeare seems to me to be playing on his audience's varied and divided views of Caesar, encouraging and discouraging in turn each man's preconceptions...on our view of Caesar depends, very largely, our judgement of the justifiability of the conspiracy...For though, as it seems to me, Shakespeare makes abundantly clear the folly and the catastrophic consequences of the murder, he does not, I think, make clear its moral indefensibility.

—ERNEST SCHANZER, AUTHOR, 1963

The motivations of both Brutus and Cassius are truly republican, with the difference that, according to the formula of the time, the one hated tyranny, and the other, tyrants. Brutus believed in legitimacy, in the traditional Roman order. Cassius could not endure having to accept a master. Both positions reflect elements in the republican character; the one represents the principles, the other, the passions which must be combined for a republican regime to endure.

—ALLAN BLOOM, PHILOSOPHER, 1964

Octavius merely inherits the name of Caesar...Octavius is no hero...It is Antony, in all his decadence, who is the last hero...The heart has gone out of the world, and the unheroic subject will take over from the citizen.

—ALLAN BLOOM, PHILOSOPHER, 1964

The Brutus of the play is neither purely the noble hero nor a blundering and unworldly idealist lead by trickery. It is essential to the design of the play that he possess those qualities which the other conspirators lack, and which they need to make the assassination an actuality; but it is equally necessary that this mind be divided, that he be a bad judge of character, that he have a capacity for self-deception, and that his end be one filled with both tragic disillusion and unshaken conviction in his own rightness.

—NORMAN SANDERS, POLITICIAN, 1967

Caesar in life had constantly insisted on his own name: 'For always I am Caesar.' In death he surrenders his name and borrows one from Brutus. It is the play's sharpest image of the interdependence of its characters, who find not just the meaning of their actions, but their very identities, in the eyes of others.

—ALEXANDER LEGGATT, SCHOLAR, 1988

Caesar and Brutus, men of extraordinary abilities and debilitating weaknesses, are more like one another than either would care to admit.

—DAVID BEVINGTON, LITERARY SCHOLAR, 1994

2000s

Brutus might be considered a cobbler or butcher, when his intention to make a holy sacrifice of Caesar turns into the butchery Antony perceives it to be, and as the city of Rome is delivered over to anarchy following the assassination, instead of regaining its liberty.

—ATHANASIOS BOULUKOS, AUTHOR, 2004



2000s continued

The reader might want to consider how 'grace, harmony, and fitness' apply to the character of Brutus in Julius Caesar, and how they make Shakespeare's hero ultimately invulnerable to the full implications of his actions and of his situation.

—ATHANASIOS BOULUKOS, AUTHOR, 2004

Antony's rhetorical powers are exactly paralleled to those of the professionals who, as Guy du Faur, seigneur de Pybrac, noted in his speech to the parlement de Paris in 1569...make a great show of not doing what they nevertheless do.

—MARGARET MCGOWAN, HISTORIAN, 2004

Caesar is an expert manipulator of crowds, but these assemblies amass a force that can check even Caesar's will—as when a cheering mass appears to compel him to decline the crown that Antony offers.

—DANIEL JUAN GIL, AUTHOR, 2007

[Antony] is both perceptively sensitive to the fashions of others and chameleon-like in his flexibility of character...Antony is more than just perceptive—he is prescient.

—JEFFREY J. YU, AUTHOR, 2007

[Cinna the poet], intent on doing the job of a defensible poet, misses the point entirely of the enormity that is unfolding; and [he] dies for being what he truly is: a poet who...represented with reckless wit the consummation of indecent desire...[Shakespeare] could not, apparently, resist taking passing note of him, the first victim of citizens made profoundly fearful by radical change.

—MARGARET MAURER, SCHOLAR, 2009

[Shakespeare] did not 'mean' [Brutus] to be any character at all, if by character we mean a clearly delineated entity whose inner workings can be laid bare like the mechanism of a clock...we will never know what lies at the core of Brutus' moral being, and perhaps it is the play itself that provides the most eloquent emblem of that mystery.

—DAVID LUCKING, SCHOLAR, 2010

...ON THEME

1700s

With how much pleasure I saw in London your tragedy of Julius Caesar...I do not pretend to approve the barbarous irregularities with which it abounds. It is only surprising that there are not still greater defects in a work, wrote in an age of ignorance, by a man who did not even understand Latin, and whose only master was his genius...

—FRANCOIS-MARIE AROUET DE VOLTAIRE, PHILOSOPHER, 1730

When Shakespeare made choice of his subject [for Julius Caesar], he no doubt commendably consulted the genius of his native land, where the spirit of liberty, however impaired, still remains a check upon power; and where could he search for a more noble example...than among the last Romans who bravely contended for that choicest principle of political life...

—FRANCIS GENTLEMAN, PLAYWRIGHT, 1774

1900s

I think those are wrong who say that the play should have been called 'Marcus Brutus,' for the murder which wrecks Brutus is that of a man infinitely greater than he—a man whose greatness pervades the whole play, and gives it at least half its tragic element...The play thus stands alone, and stands imperfect, because the crisis, the murder of Caesar, overshadows the catastrophe, the fateful death of the murderers.

—WILLIAM WARDE FOWLER, HISTORIAN, 1910

"That one cry, 'thou hast misconstrued everything!' might well serve as an epitaph for the whole of Julius Caesar. The play is full of omens and portents, augury and dream, and almost without exception these omens are misinterpreted...The compelling dream imagery of the play, which should, had it been rightly interpreted, have persuaded Caesar to avoid the Capitol and Cinna not to go forth, is deflected by the characters of men, making tragedy inevitable.

—MARJORIE B. GARBER, SCHOLAR, 1974



WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

1900s
continued

[Julius Caesar] has often been related to the contemporary play of Revenge, a form which Shakespeare was shortly to exploit fully in Hamlet. This relation exists; but on the broadest view, the revenger is history, conceived as God-ordained. Its victim Brutus, clearly seen in the perspective of time, was deserving of punishment only because, for all his knowledge, he did not know enough. None of them did, and that may account for the deliberately hollow tone of some of the things they say.

—FRANK KERMODE, LITERARY CRITIC, 1974

Julius Caesar is a complex and ambiguous play, which does not concern itself principally with political theory, but rather with the strange blindness of the rational mind—in politics and elsewhere—to the great irrational powers which flow through life and control it.

—MARJORIE B. GARBER, SCHOLAR, 197

Shakespeare dramatizes this idea of history by constantly keeping his spectators aware of history as a phenomenon while they watch his play...[Julius Caesar] takes history itself as subject by dramatizing it as an active force. Unlike most history plays, by Shakespeare or others, Julius Caesar is actually a play about history.

—THOMAS F. VAN LAAN, SCHOLAR, 1978

The central doctrine of Stoicism was that nothing mattered except virtue, that it was possible to detect in the world a divine purpose, guiding all things to their perfection, that it was man's duty to try to identify himself with this purpose, and to train towards any possibility, whether public or private, of helping others to become virtuous.

—J.B. LEISHMAN, SCHOLAR, 1979

In Julius Caesar, the art of persuasion has come to permeate life so completely that people find themselves using it not only to influence others but to deceive themselves. This is true, above all, of Brutus....His real verbal ingenuity declares itself only when he is suing the techniques of oratory to blind himself and (occasionally) his friends.

—ANNE BARTON, SCHOLAR, 1982

...part of the peculiar beauty of human excellence just is its vulnerability. The tenderness of a plant is not the dazzling hardness of a gem. ...Human excellence is seen...in the Greek poetic tradition as something whose very nature it is to be in need, a growing thing in the world that could not be made invulnerable and keep its own peculiar fineness.

—MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM, PHILOSOPHER, 1986

The tragedies characteristically show a struggle between the ambition to transcend the merely human and a recognition of the losses entailed by this ambition.

—MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM, PHILOSOPHER, 1986

Finishing second in the Olympics gets you silver. Finishing second in politics gets you oblivion.

—RICHARD M. NIXON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, 1988

We see these Romans posing for each other and for themselves, and we sense the effort it demands. Even Cassius's view of himself as a tempter involves a certain posturing. Is there anything but performance here? Do these people have private lives, private relationships, or are they on show all the time?

—ALEXANDER LEGGATT, SCHOLAR, 1988

All the security around the American president is just to make sure the man who shoots him gets caught.

—NORMAN MAILER, NOVELIST, 1990

2000s

Caesar's cloak, the diverting gesture so effectively exploited by Antony, had abolished all thought of the justice of Brutus's and Cassius's cause. Diversion, in the context of civil war, was indeed a spectacular and deadly weapon of persuasion.

—MARGARET M. MCGOWAN, HISTORIAN, 2004



2000s
continued

Julius Caesar has been acknowledged to be an ambiguous work that does not assess the principal characters, conflicting politics, or the assassination itself in black and white but in many shades of gray... Thus, Shakespeare chose not to impose a didactically political or moral theme on his material, which could not support it anyway. Instead, Shakespeare made the very ambiguity of Caesar and his assassination the focus of the play.

—JEFFREY J. YU, SCHOLAR, 2007

In Julius Caesar, one's fashion can be influenced by others, and the resulting fashion can lead to misconstruals. Moreover, those who are the most aware of the subjective nature of interpretation—whether of events, other people, or themselves—are those most able to manipulate others and those less likely to suffer the perilous consequences of misinterpretation. Cassius and, especially, Antony, are aware of the implications and consequences of subjective (self-)interpretation.

—JEFFREY J. YU, SCHOLAR, 2007

By most metrics, poetry is not defensible. It is not moral nor useful in any ordinary way. In Julius Caesar, Shakespeare seems compelled to grant the validity of what those who disdain poetry say about it: that it is inherently, and, especially in moments of political crisis, at best irrelevant to the world's workings and at worst liable to the accusation of being perverse, even dangerous, in its indifference to everything but its own logic.

—MARGARET MURER, SCHOLAR, 2009

In the tragedy entitled Julius Caesar too there is an absence at the heart which can be construed to signify a variety of things but which never, therefore, ceases to be an absence. If words like reason and cause reverberate so insistently throughout the play, it is to remind us precisely of what is not there.

—DAVID LUCKING, SCHOLAR, 2010

Shakespeare has been celebrated as the greatest creator of dynamic, glamorous human personalities in all of literature, but he is also an artist of patterns of apparent coincidence whereby character traits and individual futures seem reflected in cosmic phenomena.

—PETER KISHORE SAVAL, SCHOLAR, 2011



A PLAY COMES TO LIFE A Look Back at *Julius Caesar* in Performance

Whether his dramas should be taken as plays or as literature has been disputed. But surely they should be taken as both. Acted, or seen on the stage, they disclose things hidden to the reader. Read, they reveal what no actor or theater can convey.

—HAROLD C. GODDARD, 1951

Julius Caesar has always proved something of a problem. The title character is rarely on stage and dies in Act 3. Neither Brutus nor Antony is clearly the hero of the piece, although Brutus's decision to join the conspiracy does take center stage in the first two acts of the play. It's never truly clear to whom the story most "belongs." Over the years critics have theorized a multitude of reasons why Shakespeare would choose to so construct his play, and a multitude of actors and directors have worked together to stage it, idiosyncrasies and all. The lure of its story, however, remains strong—despite its inherent challenges, and from its first performance 400 years ago to the present, *Julius Caesar* has proved one of Shakespeare's most popular plays with generations of audiences.

The performance history of Shakespeare's plays has involved cutting, adaptation and rewriting. *Julius Caesar*, in common with the rest of Shakespeare's dramas, is rarely performed in its entirety, despite it being one of the playwright's shorter pieces. Scholars of Renaissance Theater hypothesize that in Shakespeare's day, his and other playwright's scripts were fluid, unstable documents, changing from performance to performance, and frequently cut. Cast lists from seventeenth-century productions do show the full complement of characters, but over the following two centuries, the lines of lesser characters were frequently cut or redistributed to enhance the roles of Casca and the other conspirators—presumably to attract a company's principal players to those otherwise thankless roles. Cutting the text and redistributing the lines also meant that fewer actors were required to mount a production, and costs could be kept down. Flavius's and Marullus's lines in Act 1, scene 1, for instance, were often given to Casca and Decius.

The role of Cinna the Poet was first cut in 1719 and did not reappear in most productions until the twentieth century—a decision which may have been based as much in the politics and morality of the time as the financial expediency! In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the play was modified for the sake of propriety. Shakespeare's pagan Romans behaved

themselves like God-fearing Englishmen (and women); Portia, for example, was then portrayed decorously wounded her arm, not her thigh as Shakespeare prescribed—and references to nightgowns were carefully excised. Cuts were also made to remove language and ideas inconsistent with "heroic" tragedy. Brutus's death scene was frequently lengthened (for heroic effect) and the proscription scene, in which the triumvirate plans the slaughter of hundreds of "conspirators," was almost invariably cut to protect Antony's "noble" image. *Julius Caesar* did, however, manage to avoid the dubious fate of some other of Shakespeare's tragedies, when subsequent writers changed the story to make it more "appropriate." (*King Lear*, for example, in an adaptation that held the stage for nearly two centuries, was rewritten to end happily.)

It was only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the performance of Shakespeare's texts in full, without extensive rewrites, interpolations or excisions came into vogue. Over time, as audience perceptions of patriotism, monarchism and honor have evolved, so have performers' interpretations of Caesar's characters. The text has been altered frequently to reflect changing attitudes.

Although *Julius Caesar* wasn't published until 1623 when two actors from Shakespeare's company published the First Folio of his collected works, it is believed to have been written and first performed in 1599. The play was immediately popular; Shakespeare's contemporaries often alluded to *Julius Caesar* in their own works, a sure sign that audiences were well acquainted with the play. Caesar and other noble ancients were often the subjects of books and plays in Renaissance England, where the return to the classics was at the forefront of the intellectual movement. Shakespeare's Caesar was staged

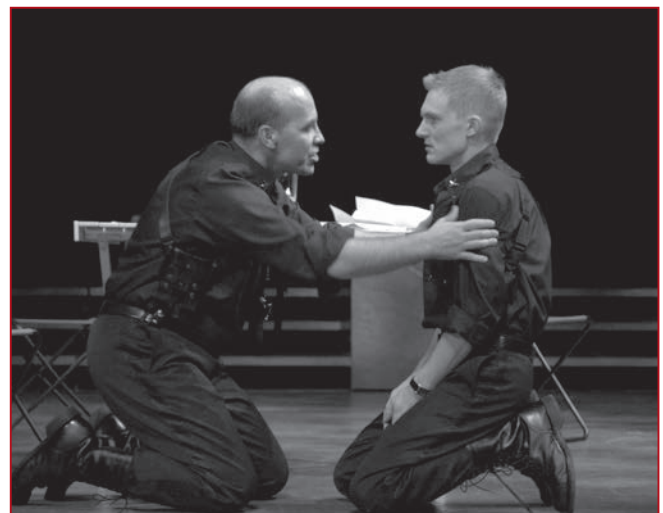


photo by Liz Lauren

FROM LEFT: KEVIN GUDAHL AS BRUTUS AND SCOTT PARKINSON AS CASSIUS
IN CST'S 2003 PRODUCTION OF *JULIUS CAESAR*,
DIRECTED BY BARBARA GAINES.



frequently at the Globe until London's playhouses were closed by the new Commonwealth in 1642.

We know very little about the style of acting used by Shakespeare's company, although his writing about performance, preserved in the text of his plays (such as the play within the play in *Hamlet*), suggests the playwright's preference for naturalistic playing. Brutus was seen as a noble "Philosopher/Hero." The Stoic qualities that Elizabethans admired—self-control and forbearance—may well have been stressed over the character's vacillation and shortsightedness. The Roman mob was generally played by the company's principal comedians. From a single illustration we have still of a performance of another of Shakespeare's Roman plays, *Titus Andronicus*, we know that the costuming, even in Shakespeare's Rome, was largely contemporary—that is, Elizabethan. One or two of the actors are depicted wearing toga-like apparel over the rest of their modern-day costume. Historical costuming as we know it today did not evolve as a theatrical style until the 1800s.

The execution of their own king, Charles I, in 1642, and subsequent restoration of the monarchy in 1660, undoubtedly reinforced Britons' strong identification with Caesarian Rome and *Julius Caesar*. Theatergoers gladly flocked to what had become a fervently patriotic play. London's premier Brutus from 1684 to 1691 was Thomas Betterton, whose Brutus was praised for his "massive dignity." Revivals of *Julius Caesar* continued to be popular through the eighteenth century, with a short break between 1780 and 1812, as the French Revolution turned up the heat under the British political system once more, making plays about the upheaval of those in control significantly less welcome.

Plum roles for seventeenth and eighteenth century actors were Brutus and Antony, leaving lesser company members to tackle the "less glamorous" Cassius and Caesar. Although the historical Caesar was an almost godlike figure to Tudor Englishmen, the stage Caesar came to be played as a stock villain. It was not until the fascist regimes of the twentieth century that the role received full weight in performance. The mob plays a powerful part in the dramatic action of *Julius Caesar* as class tensions come to an explosive head during Antony's funeral speech. However, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the "crowd" continued to be played by a handful of comedians—typically no more than three to six. No attempt was made to coordinate the



FROM LEFT: SCOTT JAECK AS MARC ANTONY, KEVIN GUDAHLE AS BRUTUS, SCOTT PARKINSON AS CASSIUS AND GUY ADKINS AS OCTAVIUS IN CST'S 2003 PRODUCTION OF *JULIUS CAESAR*, DIRECTED BY BARBARA GAINES.

photo by Liz Lauren

activities of Antony and the mob, and often they were so busy trying to steal each other's thunder that they may as well have been in different plays.

In 1812 John Philip Kemble, a London actor/manager, became enamored of the beau ideal (literally, "beautiful ideal") school of painting, in which artists presented the world as they felt it should be rather than "copying nature," as did the school of Naturalism. Kemble applied this concept to his productions, including *Julius Caesar*, cultivating a "grand style" of acting, characterized by majestic physical movements and formal declamation. In his staging of *Julius Caesar* the emphasis was on the public Brutus, the statesman; his less noble qualities were of little consequence—and were therefore cut. For the first time under Kemble's direction, the mob scenes were choreographed to enhance dramatic effect. Using eighty-five extras, he created a living picture frame onstage. In the mid-nineteenth century, Victorian worship of middle-class domestic life affected British theatrical tastes. Audiences wanted to identify with the characters onstage, not just admire them from afar. As companies adapted the style of Kemble's majestic productions, Shakespeare's stage Romans began to take on the appearance of statuary.

Then William Charles Macready stepped in. One of England's most famous actors, Macready played Brutus, Cassius and Antony over the course of his career. Taking his cue from Kemble, Macready relied on more than one hundred extras for



his mob, but unlike Kemble, Macready choreographed their movements to complement stage action. He was thus able to heighten the emotional effect of the assassination sequence for his audience, engaging their sympathy by showing the horrified reaction of people just like themselves. In Macready's hands, *Julius Caesar* became a social tragedy.

In 1881 the Meiningen Court Company visited London with its production of *Julius Caesar*. Famous for its development of ensemble acting, the Court Company was an early influence on Constantin Stanislavski, the "father" of modern acting. In its productions—unlike the touring "star" vehicles endemic to the period—no one performer was supposed to stand out to the detriment of another. Stage designs were meticulous in their attention to historical accuracy and grandeur. The company's increased attention to minor roles sometimes meant major roles went underdeveloped and undistinguished. The Meiningen troupe used hundreds of supernumeraries, or extras, to create detailed, realistic Roman street scenes. They recruited a London actor, Ludwig Barnay, to play Antony. Barnay's Antony so stood out from this lifelike Rome that the performance became incredibly popular, with the effect that Antony afterwards became "the" role for actors to play.

After seeing the Meiningen production, Herbert Beerbohm Tree staged a pictorially ornate production in 1898, cut significantly to accommodate numerous and complicated scene shifts. Critics felt the production was not so much Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* as a beautiful pantomime. By this time, audiences had become accustomed to a high level of historical accuracy in stage design, and Tree felt that for them to be suitably impressed by Shakespeare they had to be awed by the splendor of ancient Rome. Tree decided to play Antony himself after seeing Barnay's performance. Rather than play a supporting role, he, too, made Antony the center of attention—this time by cutting and rearranging the text. With Antony at center stage, other characters, especially Brutus, underwent major changes. Brutus lost dialogue, which in Shakespeare's text had once presented him in a sympathetic light, and Caesar finally ceased to be a stock character tyrant as he evolved into the hero's valued friend.

One of the most influential productions of the twentieth century was New York City's Mercury Theatre production November of 1937, directed by Orson Welles. Indeed, many critics regard this production as the singlemost important production of Shakespeare on the American stage, as it opened days after the pre-WWII alliance of Italy, Germany and Japan. Presenting one of this century's first "concept" productions of *Julius Cae-*

sar, Welles used the widespread anti-fascist, prodemocracy sentiment that then engulfed the country. Caesar was a black-clothed, jack-booted European tyrant, and Welles, playing Brutus, looked very much like the Italian dictator Mussolini. Welles cut the play so drastically that it ran for a mere 109 minutes, and transposed scenes to better illustrate the unifying idea of his production. He also added lines from Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* for the plebians. The production proved so successful that it was the first by a professional theater company in America to be recorded for distribution.

Perhaps the best-known film version of *Julius Caesar* is the 1953 version, directed by Joseph Mankiewicz and starring the young Marlon Brando as Marc Antony. Producing the film was John Housemann, who had worked with Orson Wells on his Mercury Theater production sixteen years before. The only alteration of Shakespeare's original text was the cutting of the Portia and Lucius scene, and the Cinna the Poet massacre. The film opens with lines from Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, giving the audience the background for the story, as well as linking Shakespeare's story to a larger literary and historical context. Mankiewicz's interpretation strongly favored Marc Antony over

the conspirators, partly because of Brando's Academy Award-nominated performance, and partly due to the political climate of the time, which viewed the questioning of the government and its leaders as

a grave threat.

Julius Caesar's stars in the twentieth century also included Sir John Gielgud, who played Cassius repeatedly in London and Stratford before starring in the 1953 Academy Award-winning film alongside Marlon Brando. Gielgud's was one of the first portrayals of Cassius to give the part nobility of character rather than simply playing foil to the stoic Brutus.

Caesar hit the silver screen again in 1970 with director Stuart Burge and a cast including Charlton Heston as Marc Antony and Sir John Gielgud as Caesar. Burge, who had directed *Julius Caesar* for the BBC film production in 1959, received much less praise than the Mankiewicz version. *The New York Times* described the film "as flat and juiceless as a dead had-dock," and *The Sun* scorned its "hideous cardboard scenery." Critics raged over miscasting and the use of fake English accents. Charlton Heston is quoted as having said Antony was "the easiest" of all Shakespearean roles—perhaps why his performance, too, was mocked by theatergoers and critics alike. Despite its spectacular budget, the acting and directing did not add up to a spectacular production. Other film versions

**Unlike the touring "star" vehicles
endemic to the period—no one performer
was supposed to stand out to
the detriment of another**



photo by Liz Lauren

CAST OF CST'S 2003 PRODUCTION OF *JULIUS CAESAR*, DIRECTED BY BARBARA GAINES.

include a production starring Jason Robards as Brutus and Richard Chamberlain as Octavius, and the ubiquitous BBC production. *Julius Caesar* has also been made into two silent films and an "Animated Tales" cartoon version for HBO.

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) broke new ground in its 1993 production staged in its small theater (The Other Place), with all its seats removed. Setting the performance in modern dress, director David Thacker turned his audience into plebians. Standing throughout the performance and following the actors throughout the theater, the audience became the Roman crowds in one scene, and eavesdropped on private conversations in the next. The production did have its drawbacks, including patrons who were so close to Caesar's murder that they passed out, and some complained about standing for so long. But the production was well received, and as one patron said: "The assassination is more moving after you've shaken hands with Caesar." The RSC struck audiences again with their 2012 production of *Caesar*, in which director Greg Doran set the tyrannical feud in modern-day West Africa. His decision, rooted in the politically corrupt reputation of this region, engaged audiences in the play with a stark new perspective. The production was a thrilling hit, capturing the echoes intermingled seamlessly between Elizabethan England, ancient Rome, and modern-day Africa.

Another groundbreaking perspective was staged in London by the Donmar Warehouse in 2012, led by acclaimed opera director Phyllida Lloyd. Wishing to emphasize the universality

of *Julius Caesar's* themes, and with the intention of transforming the masculinity often associated with political schemes, forceful speeches, and the bloody face of war, Lloyd launched an adaptation of the play with an all-female cast. Lending the roles to a powerhouse cast of older women, including Francis Barber as Caesar and Harriet Walter as Brutus, gave an unexpected flair and depth to the production. Set in a jail, the established power structure and shadows of deception and treachery evocative of those in ancient Rome. The female inmates decide to stage a play to help them cope with the frustrations of imprisonment.

In recent theater history, modern theatergoers have been introduced to the characters of *Julius Caesar* in more human dimensions, foregoing the grandeur that once made them "truly tragic" to the play's audiences. In what has come to be known as "director's theater" post World War II, the artistic objective often has been originality and contemporary relevance—finding previously unexplored aspects of the play's meaning. At Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Artistic Director Barbara Gaines staged the company's first full-length production of the play in 2003, with a cast including Guy Adkins, Kevin Gudahl, Scott Jaeck, Linda Kimbrough and Scott Parkinson. Gaines's contemporary production grappled with the timeless political and moral implications of one person's death. Shakespeare has been rearranged, rewritten and redrawn to fit contexts and ideas that the playwright could never have imagined. And *Julius Caesar* has flourished in its new surroundings. ★



A CONVERSATION WITH THE DIRECTOR



Last fall on his visit to CST to continue his casting process, director Jonathan Munby met with the staff to talk about his vision for his production of Julius Caesar.

Q Why did you decide to direct *Julius Caesar* here—and now?

A The question I ask in approaching any Shakespeare play is this: How can I allow the audience to be as close to it as I possibly can? What does it mean for them, coming to see this play in 2013 in this theater? How can I release the play for them?

This play is about power, about the misuse of power. It's also about fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of misrule, fear of losing those things we hold priceless, such as liberty. How thrilling it would be to do this play and bring it into the present tense—so that we tell this story not in ancient Rome but as if we are seeing it through the lens of contemporary political America. There was something about the immediacy of the American election looming that heightens this story in a really interesting way. As a theater-maker, I have to make my own connections in order to tell the story. I'm interested in where the writer was when he or she wrote it and what they were responding to in their world. And I have to find something as relevant to me, or as interesting to me.

Q To an audience not yet familiar with your work, how would you describe your approach to these works?

A Language is at the forefront, always. The word comes first, but what I try to do is find an emotional truth. If you dare to go there, these plays become extraordinarily resonant, and personal, as opposed to being pageants about a time and a place that we no longer connect with. Real people in real situations. It's understanding first, I suppose, the London that Shakespeare was writing in, and the political debate that was going on. And then it's transporting that story into our present—and the fantasy of 'What if?' It's a terrifying fact, is it not, that history repeats itself and that we don't learn from our mistakes. These stories seem to be on an endless kind of cycle. The

question I want the audience to come away with is: What is this all for? Why on earth did we go through this? What have we achieved from this?

Q Let's start talking about some of the key characters in *Caesar*.

A I think Shakespeare was working out how to write Hamlet as he wrote Brutus. I think those questions, those interior questions, that crisis of self about 'Who am I?' 'What do I believe in?' feels to me like a prototype Hamlet. That's what makes Brutus a really interesting character and why it takes so long to persuade him to join the cause. He's torn. I think he believes in Caesar to a certain extent, but he's also fearful of his potential if he's crowned.

Antony seems to be much more invested in the current regime and is torn apart, affected deeply by the assassination—a real believer inspired then to lead the loyalists' charge and join forces with Octavius. But I think there are

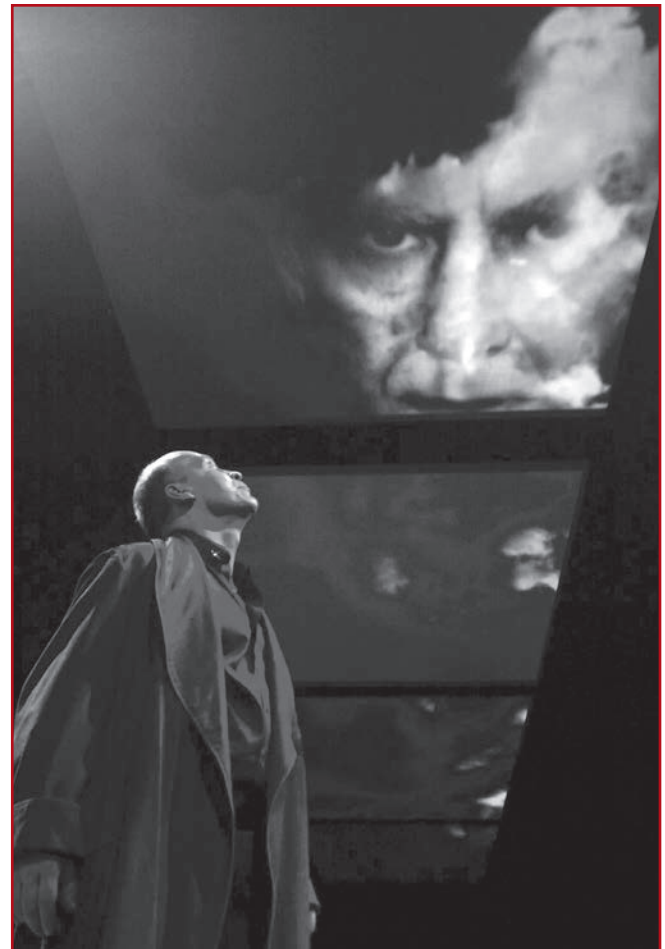


photo by Liz Lauren

FROM LEFT: KEVIN GUDAHL AS BRUTUS AND JACK RYLAND AS CAESAR'S GHOST
IN CST'S 2003 PRODUCTION OF *JULIUS CAESAR*,
DIRECTED BY BARBARA GAINES.



chinks in his armor, too. We'll explore it fully and show every unfortunate human facet of these relationships.

Cassius, to me, is the catalyst for the assassination plot. He seems personally betrayed by his leader not fulfilling some ideal, and he's terrified by Caesar's potential. But instead of waiting and affecting change if necessary through dialogue, he starts the ball rolling, managing to inspire his brother and friend, Brutus, among others. They assassinate their leader.

Q And Caesar? What kind of man is he?

A In public, Caesar denies the crown three times. Now, is that political? Is it a shrewd move? Does he have that burning desire to be almighty and is hiding it? It's fear of that desire for absolute power that fuels his assassination. But Caesar's also sick. He has epilepsy. He's deaf in one ear. He's fearful of his own mortality in a way. I think he's a man with a great tension inside him. The public and the private face. In public, he's like an egomaniac, strong willed, determined, bulletproof, mocking, ruthless. In private, he is a frightened old man whose health is failing him. We need to view all of these characters with great integrity and give a fairly balanced view. We need to understand him as an audience and have empathy for him. He's a human being, like the rest of us.

Q The Citizens, too, play a major role in your production?

A Yes, I do see this play as an investigation of the people, the citizens. Us. Shakespeare writes not just these great figures of history—Caesar, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Cicero, Cinna, Antony. He also gives us the Citizens, and they become as important a character as some of the principles. I was watching some footage of the aftermath of JFK's assassination and what it did to the people—that punch to the solar plexus, that emotional chaos when you remove somebody you believed in so entirely. In this play, a group of people in mourning who are vulnerable are manipulated by politicians and made to turn. In a scene which I think is Shakespeare at his absolute best, a poet is murdered on the street. He just happens to share the name of one of the conspirators. (It's also Shakespeare having an "in" joke about all of these names sounding so similar...) They tear this man—one of their own—from limb to limb in the street. Upturned by powerful rhetoric, they are turned into murderers.

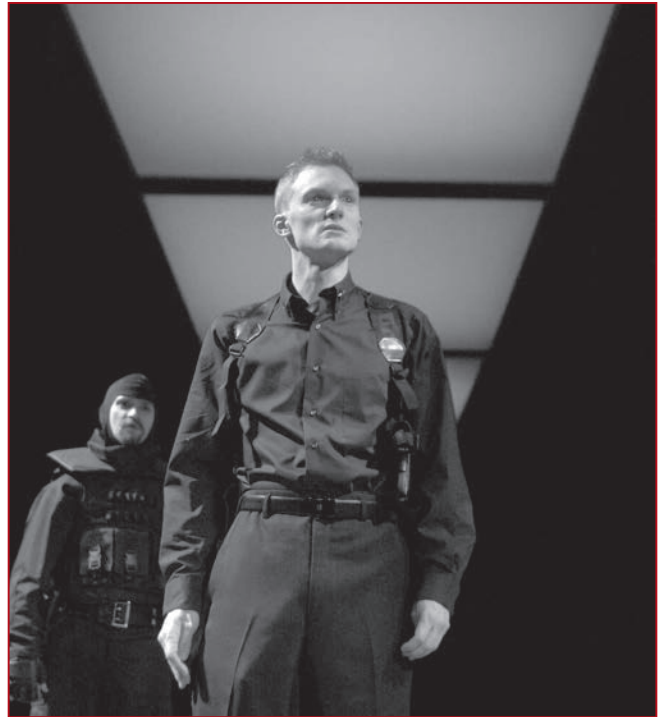


photo by Liz Lauren

SCOTT PARKINSON AS BRUTUS IN CST'S 2003 PRODUCTION OF *JULIUS CAESAR*, DIRECTED BY BARBARA GAINES.

Q Jonathan, talk about what happens next, after the assassination.

A People sometimes find the play's second half anticlimactic, but to me it feels incredibly thrilling for a number of reasons. It then becomes a play about how we deal with chaos of civil war and the disintegration of society. Something that's born out of fear actually turns into something much more frightening. If you think of the Arab Spring, the question there wasn't necessarily about whether these leaders were going to be toppled. With Gaddafi, it felt like an inevitability, actually. The question is what happens then, what happens now? The same with the invasion of Iraq, the same with Afghanistan. We have invaded countries in the name of democracy because we fear the potential of these leaders. The question we don't ask is, 'What happens now?' 'What is the exit strategy?' That's exactly what the second half of this play is about. We remove the structure. We remove the concrete at the center of it and we descend into civil war, into chaos, with people fighting for their lives. To me, there is also something very human in this second half of the play—including one of the best written scenes in the entire canon. It's a scene between Brutus and Cassius—a scene about brothers, a scene between friends, a scene about betrayal. The play goes beyond the political and actually becomes very simple and very, as I say, human.



A PLAY COMES TO LIFE

Q Can you say more about what you mentioned before, about the power of rhetoric in this world—and in ours?

A I've been working in South Africa recently, and they are fearful that there is no leader to inspire the next generation. There is no next Mandela. The language in this play is staggering. We think very negatively sometimes about politicians and their language, but there's a case to be made in this play, as well, for a need of language, a need for our politicians to be great orators, to inspire us.

Q Placing your production in contemporary "Rome, DC," you might have made some of the senators and conspirators roles for women. Why did you decide not to?

A Staging a contemporary production of the play, I certainly could have turned some male roles into women. But I think Shakespeare is doing something quite specific about the male/female conflict in this play. The women have to fight hard to be heard. Brutus's wife Portia harms herself in order to get her husband's attention. The maleness of the body politic, the ideal image of what they want their leader to be, is at the center of it.

That in mind, I chose to cast a woman as the Soothsayer—a fascinating character who is in touch with an otherness, who can see the future. Who warns Caesar. What is it for this woman to challenge this leader? We've been fantasizing about a possible story for her—as someone perhaps who lost somebody very close to her in the recent war. Grief has pushed her over the edge—and she's done with death. She'll become the conscience, or the heartbeat of the story, if you like. Lindsay Jones, our composer, is writing a lament that she will sing. Woven throughout, sometimes in counterpoint to the play's action, I want it to haunt us.

Q How will staging this play in CST's Courtyard Theater influence your production?

A You've got this great thrust and all these entrances through the audience. I want to wrap the action of the play around the audience and pull them inside it—like we're inside the battlefield itself. I've never seen Caesar at the Globe, but I can imagine it being a really exciting play to see there.

This play in particular was about those real people standing at the Globe in front of those actors as they said these lines. And it makes doing this play in this theater really exciting because you as an audience are so close to it. It's about these people watching it as much as it's about the people in the world of the play.

Q Have you made changes to the script?

A I've made some cuts to tighten the structure and the story. And I've cut pieces together and across each other. We can do it in film, so let's do it in theater. This play has always struck me not as a five-act structure, which all Shakespeare's plays are, but actually as a filmic, three-act structure. You have the plot at the beginning, the conspiracy: Act 1. You have the assassination and Caesar's funeral: Act 2. Then you have the aftermath: Act 3.

To me it seemed important to cut some of these characters out of a very long name role call—and to strengthen others.

Lucius, for example, Brutus's aide—almost like a son, the son he never had—simply disappears at some point from Shakespeare's text. Well, let's be braver than that and see this relationship through—and into the war.

Q Lastly, what are your thoughts about being an 'Englishman in a strange land' and directing this play in particular?

A I'm a Brit. I'm very aware of being an outsider coming to America, choosing this incredibly contentious context for this play. My government, as well, is very good at keeping us in a state of fear, and it seems to me that it's this idea of fear that's at the core of this play. I want to be as balanced as I can about how we view each of these characters. I can let them and their text define who they are for the audience rather than overlaying too much. I'm very, very conscious of each choice I make, especially as an outsider. But it's also a privilege being an outsider. I have an objectivity about this country and about its politics that perhaps you as natives don't. All I hope to do really is hold a mirror up to where you are now and to show every side of that and hopefully in a balanced way. ★



A CONVERSATION WITH THE FIGHT DIRECTOR



Julius Caesar Fight Choreographer
Matt Hawkins sat down with
Director of Education Marilyn Halperin
to discuss his work.

Q Matt, why do you think that we theatricalize violence?

A Violence exists. It exists in our world and we're not going to get rid of it, as much as we talk about it and want to. What we put onstage, all of our work onstage, is hopefully a representation of humanity, of our world and our views of it. Hopefully it gets us to ask questions. Putting guns onstage for *Julius Caesar*, or rapiers and daggers in *Romeo and Juliet*, one argument could be: Look, we're glorifying violence, using it as entertainment. You can make that argument. So what I'm saying is that it's our responsibility that there's that follow-up conversation with students. I think that's so, so important. Why did that happen? What would you have done if you'd been in that same situation? Why are people violent? Why would they do that?

Q So, you're saying that the experience of witnessing violence in the theater requires conversation afterwards—that the two must go together?

A If you're going to put violence onstage and you're going to show death and destruction, and you don't make it a learning experience, then we're failing. We are failing the world in fighting violence. What I'm saying is—and this sounds weird—you can create peace in the world by putting violence in front of people in the theater so that people will ask: Why are people violent? It's all about self-reflection as human beings, right? That's how you make change. Self-exploration.

Q In *Romeo and Juliet*, which you're also working on here now, why do these young men kill?

A Violence happens when a person does not know how to speak anymore. When they've realized that words can't deal with their situation, that's when the violence happens. And

that's what I think is good about looking at these plays. These families hate each other. They want to kill each other. And every play I work on, that's what I try to get the director and actors to realize: at this point, if the playwright wrote that there's a fight, that must mean we don't have any other option, or we think we don't. But when we stage violence and then put these stories in front of younger audiences, I hope that we have to ask that question of: Why, why, why, why, why?

Q And is the violence qualitatively different in *Julius Caesar*, or is it simply that the actors are carrying weapons we recognize as dangerous?

A Regardless of how events are staged, violence is violence and killing another human being is killing another human being. But our modern sensibility is going

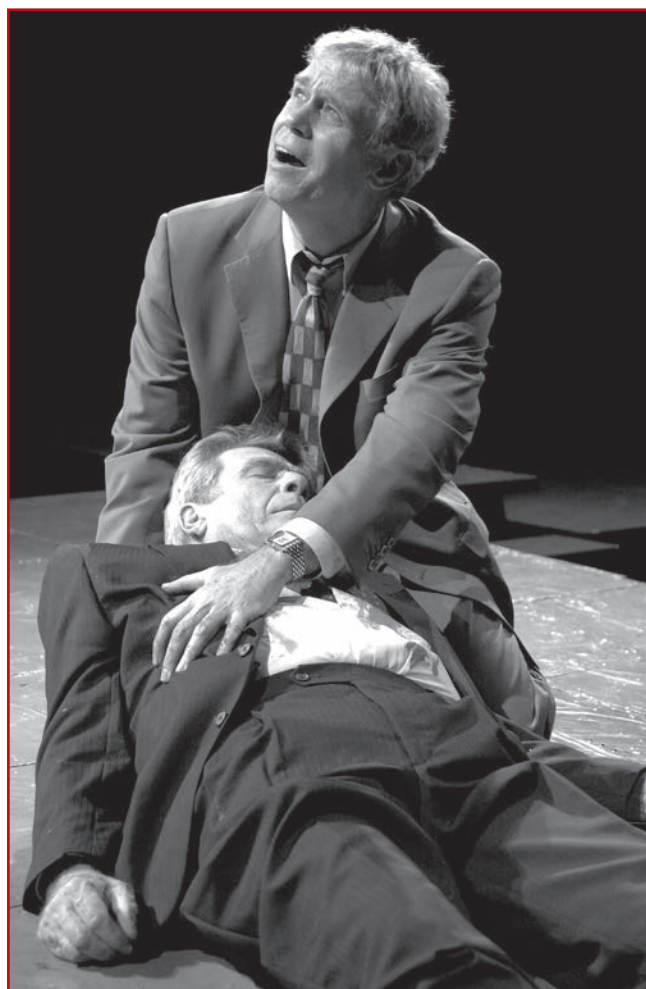


photo by Liz Lauren

FROM TOP: SCOTT JAECK AS MARC ANTONY AND
JACK RYLAND AS JULIUS CAESAR IN CST'S 2003 PRODUCTION
OF *JULIUS CAESAR*, DIRECTED BY BARBARA GAINES.



A PLAY COMES TO LIFE

to be much more sensitive to killing someone with guns as opposed to swords and daggers. We don't see people on television or in the news getting killed in the real world with blades, we see guns. And in 2013, with guns killing people, we have a much more immediate emotional response. When we stage one of these classic plays in period costume, like we're doing *Romeo and Juliet*, the most dangerous weapon in that world is a dagger. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a knife or sword was obviously endowed with as much violence and destruction as an automatic rifle is for us today.

Q As someone who spends much of his work life focused on stage combat, what is your understanding of what, at its core, triggers violence?

A For me, it's about fear. I can't speak for anybody else, right? But we've all had those feelings. We've all wanted to do something, but then it's that next beat. There's nothing wrong with being angry—that's a real thing. It's what do we now do with that, right? And that's where we get in trouble, where we get out of control. When I've gotten to the point that I've felt compelled to act on anger, it's normally 'cause I'm afraid. I'm afraid the other person is going to make me look stupid, or the other person is going to make me feel insecure, or they've hurt my ego or what I think is my masculinity, and I'm afraid of feeling small. I'm afraid of feeling not as good as they are. Or if I'm physically threatened. So I think fear has a lot to do with it.

Q Do you ever have second thoughts about staging violence?

A I change my mind almost every day. Something happened a couple years ago here we did *Edward II*, and I choreographed the stage violence. Edward is assassinated, in the most violent, grotesque way imaginable. And I remember one night seeing an audience member bolting from the room. The young Matt Hawkins would have been thinking: 'Yeah! We're creating a visceral experience.' But it didn't seem like a cathartic experience for that woman. It seemed that there was some history that it conjured up in her. That



photo by Liz Lauren

FROM LEFT: SCOTT PARKINSON AS BRUTUS AND JAY WHITTAKER AS CASCA
IN CST'S 2003 PRODUCTION OF *JULIUS CAESAR*, DIRECTED BY BARBARA GAINES.

moment was the first time that I started questioning my profession and my specialty skill of violence. It's a very violent, aggressive world that I inhabit in my work.

Q How did you get into theater—and this particular aspect of it—in the first place?

A I'm from Texas, so it was football, football, football. I grew up playing football, and then I ended up hurting my back. What else was I going to do with my life? A football buddy of mine was in a show and I went and saw it, and thought, 'Oh, I can do that better than he can.' So this competitive side is actually how I got into it. Then I started to go to the theater and I started acting. I wasn't very good and I couldn't find my bearings. Then when I was an undergrad at SMU, Southern Methodist University in Dallas, I did *Henry IV Part 1*, and I played Prince Hal and got to use a broadsword and shield. And I thought, 'Oh, theater can be athletic? Oh. That's new.' I had never seen that before and I never felt that before. I was really blessed because there was an individual on faculty there, a mime and a boxer, and he taught me everything he knew. ★

We don't see people on television or in the news getting killed in the real world with blades, we see guns.



Strategies for Using Film to Teach Shakespeare

MARY T. CHRISTEL taught AP Literature and Composition as well as media and film studies courses at Adlai E. Stevenson High School from 1979 to 2012. She has published several works on media literacy including *Seeing and Believing: How to Teach Media Literacy in the English Classroom* with Ellen Krueger (Heinemann) as well as contributing articles to *Teaching Shakespeare Today* (NCTE), *Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-First Century* (U of Ohio), *For All Time: Critical Issues in Shakespeare Studies* (Wakefield Press). Ms. Christel has been recognized by the Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for promoting media literacy education.

Given that Shakespeare, as a playwright in Elizabethan England, found himself at the epicenter of popular culture, one can't help but wonder if he wouldn't be writing screenplays if he were alive today. He would likely be pleased that his legacy is not only perpetuated on stages like CST but also on the silver—and now digital—screens. It is up to the savvy teacher to determine how to help students “read” Shakespeare in the three ways Mary Ellen Dakin suggests: as text, as performance and as film.

Mary Ellen Dakin's recently published a book entitled *Reading Shakespeare Film First* (NCTE 2012), which might seem a bit contradictory to the approach many English/Language Arts teachers take. How can one “read Shakespeare” if one places “film first”? Film might be considered an enemy when helping students to read and appreciate Shakespeare's work. For most teachers, film generally follows the reading of a play and functions as the “dessert” at the unit's end. The strategies that follow are intended to help teachers reconsider how and when film can be used in order to motivate, clarify and enrich students' engagement with any play.

FILMS CAN BE USED BEFORE READING... ...to preview the story, characters and themes

Many of the stories that Shakespeare dramatized were familiar, even well known, to his audience, so providing students with a broad outline of the action of a play prior to reading it would be consistent with the knowledge that Renaissance audiences brought to many of the plays they saw performed on stage. Previewing can be accomplished in the classroom in one of two ways.

First, twelve of the plays were adapted into thirty-minute animated films, which aired in the 1990s on HBO and now are distributed on DVD by Ambrose Video. These “Shakespeare in short” adaptations retain the play's original language and present the essentials of the story in an abbreviated form. This activity acquaints students with the major characters, incidents and themes, providing a “road map” for students who might get mired in sorting out who's who and what's what as they adjust themselves to the language and structure of play.

A second method requires the teacher to select key scenes from a film that takes a relatively conventional approach to the play. For example, Franco Zeffirelli's version of *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) would be preferred over Baz Luhrmann's film (1996), while Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* (1996) is a rare “full text” version and useful in this context whereas Zeffirelli's adaptation (1990) reduces the text to two hours on screen. The BBC filmed all of Shakespeare's plays for



television in the 1970s and '80s; these versions are faithful to the texts, with relatively traditional staging and the full text intact. Like the animated films, the teacher's scene selection should provide students with a broad outline of the play, as well as introduction to key events, main characters and crucial soliloquies. Students can, and do, use these scenes as reference points in their discussion of the play as they read it.

...to create context

Film can be utilized as an introductory element of a unit to provide a context prior to reading a specific play. A&E's Biography series provides students with Shakespeare's biographical details and a survey of the times in *Shakespeare: A Life of Drama* (1996), a conventional approach to delivering contextual information. (Materials to frame the use of this fifty-minute program can be located at http://www.aetv.com/class/admin/study_guide/archives/aetv_guide.0550.html.) Historian Michael Wood takes viewers on a lively tour of various locations throughout contemporary England to explore Shakespeare's life, times, and plays in this acclaimed four-part series, *In Search of Shakespeare* (2004). (An episode guide is available at www.pbs.org/shakespeare/theshow/ to facilitate selection of the most appropriate segments from this comprehensive work.)

Context can be built by viewing a commercially released film that "sets the stage" for the Elizabethan era, enabling students to get a sense of the politics, social customs, and "look" of the times. A film like *Elizabeth* (1998) starring Cate Blanchett has little to do with Shakespeare, but it provides a vivid glimpse into the monarch's struggle to claim and maintain the throne. *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) and *Anonymous* (2011) provide glimpses into the world of early modern theater practice and Shakespeare himself, but the liberties these films take with conventional historical fact can create more confusion than clarity for many students. Excerpts, however, could be used to help students visualize the time and the occasion of attending the theater, but contextual information is required to help students sort out historical accuracy from bias, poetic license or pure invention.

Al Pacino's documentary *Looking for Richard* (1996) provides an ideal way to contextualize the study of *Richard III*, but it should not be overlooked as a viewing experience to help students of any play understand what makes the study and performance of Shakespeare invigorating for actors, directors, scholars, readers and audiences. Pacino's passion for the hunchback king is infectious and the film is effectively broken up into sections, focusing on a visit to Shakespeare's birthplace, Shakespeare's Globe as it rebuilt in contemporary London, brief conversations with modern Shakespearean scholars and directors, as well as observing actors in rehearsal tackling the meaning of particularly dense passages of text. The film may not be practical in most cases to screen in full, but it certainly helps to build anticipation and knowledge prior to diving into a full text.

Films that document students interacting with Shakespearean texts can also generate enthusiasm for reading, and perhaps performing, a selected play. *Shakespeare High* (2012) showcases California high school students who annually compete in a Shakespeare scene contest. Students, who are both likely and unlikely competitors, are followed from scene selection, casting, rehearsal, through the final competition. *The Hobart Shakespeareans* (2005) features fifth-graders, whose home language is not English, performing scenes with uncommon poise and command of the language as a result of a dedicated teacher's commitment to offering his students the rigor of studying Shakespeare. These films shared, in full or in part, can provide motivation to not only read and understand the text but to take it to the next level of student engagement: performance.

Films Media Group, formerly Films for the Humanities and Sciences, has an extensive catalogue of films useful in providing context; many titles are available as streaming video, allowing teachers to "sample" a film without that "lifelong commitment" to purchasing a DVD that can cost several hundred dollars and sometimes not be the proper fit for students' interest or abilities. Many of their offerings have been produced in the UK or by the BBC and cover the gamut of plays and approaches to Shakespeare in performance and on the page. (That search can start at <http://ffh.films.com/>.)



FILMS CAN BE USED DURING READING...

...to clarify understanding

For students who are having difficulty visualizing the action or fully comprehending the language, it is beneficial to watch a faithful adaptation incrementally, act by act. Again, Zeffirelli's version of *Romeo and Juliet* works well. The film is easily broken down act by act with all the critical incidents and speeches intact. Students should be given a focus for their viewing, through the lens of their own questions and quandaries that they retain after reading an act, along with thoughts on how the film might address them. As students become more comfortable with the reading/viewing rhythm as they work through the play, they can adopt a more "critical" attitude toward examining later acts to discuss choices made by the screenwriter/adaptor, director, designers and actors.

When working with students who are really struggling with the language and where listening to a recorded version of a play isn't particularly helpful or engaging, a film can also be used in a "read along" fashion for the exposition and key scenes or speeches. Students follow in their own printed text while the film is running, and are coached to follow in their book while taking "peeks" at the screen when they need the support of the image to clarify their understanding of the language. "Staged" versions of a play with close adherence to the script (BBC, for example) are better choices for this application. More "cinematic" versions tend to be so visually rich that students have a hard time reading rather than watching. For example, the RSC filmed version of *Macbeth* (1979) featuring Ian McKellan and Judi Dench in the leading roles follows the standard text fairly closely in most of the interactions between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. This strategy is best used for the analysis of short scenes or at moments of crisis in students' understanding. It is essential for teachers to prescreen scenes to make sure that they closely follow the edition of the play being studied as much as possible.

...to make comparisons

Just as the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries adapted Shakespeare's scripts to fit the fashion and tastes of the theater-going audiences (as susceptible to trends as the fashion industry), once Shakespeare's work entered the multi-media performance space of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the text is often transformed to support the spectacle of the cinematic image. Every cinematic adapter of a complex dramatic text must consider the balance of "showing" versus "telling," sometimes choosing to emphasize the visual over the verbal. These adapters struggle with the question: What can the art of cinema reveal visually through a close-up, crosscut, or a montage that effectively augments or replaces the text?

In the past thirty years, Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies, histories, and romances have been transported to modern settings that maintain the broad outlines of plot and character but replace Shakespeare's blank verse with contemporary language and colloquialisms. A sample list of adaptations includes:

<i>Zebrahead</i> (1992)	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
<i>Ten Things I Hate About You</i> (1999)	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
<i>O</i> (2001)	<i>Othello</i>
<i>She's the Man</i> (1996)	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>My Own Private Idaho</i> (1991)	<i>Henry IV</i>
<i>Tempest</i> (1982)	<i>The Tempest</i>
<i>A Thousand Acres</i> (1997)	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>Scotland, PA</i> (2001)	<i>Macbeth</i>
<i>Men of Respect</i> (1990)	<i>Macbeth</i>



Additional adaptations of plot, characters and setting include four plays in the BBC series, entitled *Shakespeare Re-Told* (2005): *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Macbeth*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A second type of adaptation shifts the plot and characters to another genre, such as the musical (*West Side Story*/*Romeo and Juliet* or *Kiss Me Kate*/*The Taming of the Shrew*), science fiction (*Forbidden Planet*/*The Tempest*) or the Western (*Broken Lance*/*King Lear*). *Royal Deceit* (aka *Prince of Jutland*, 1994) tells the story of the “historical” Prince Hamlet using Danish source material to differentiate the story from Shakespeare’s approach. Akira Kurosawa produced the best-known adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays placing them in a different cultural context with his films *Throne of Blood* (1957) based on *Macbeth* and *Ran* (1985) based on *King Lear*. Soviet filmmaker Grigori Kozintsev adapted both *Hamlet* (1964) and *King Lear* (1991), which have been restored and released recently on DVD. For film historians and real curiosity seekers, a collection of adaptations, which run from a few minutes to over an hour, showcase the earliest eras of cinema, entitled *Silent Shakespeare*. Sharing these adaptations, in part or in full, can facilitate the discussion of the relevance of Shakespeare’s themes, conflicts and characters across time, cultures, and cinematic traditions.

FILMS CAN BE USED AFTER READING...

...for culminating projects and summative assessment

Students can successfully engage in their own film production as a collaborative project. A movie trailer can tout an imagined film adaptation of the play they have just studied. The necessary steps involved can be found in *Lesson Plans for Creating Media-Rich Classrooms* (NCTE 2007), which includes Scott Williams’s lesson, “Turning Text into Movie Trailers: The *Romeo and Juliet* iMovie Experience.” Creating a trailer requires that students: first focus on the essential elements of plot, character and theme in order to convey excitement; and second, develop an imagined version in a highly condensed and persuasive form, which comes to life in a minute or two.

TERMS TO EXAMINE THE PAGE-TO-SCREEN PROCESS

(adapted from *Film Adaptation*, ed. James Naremore)

Fidelity Much discussion in film adaptation criticism focuses on how faithful a film is to the source material. Obviously, film and literature use very different narrative strategies and tools of composition. A fruitful way to have students approach the question of fidelity is to ask them to list the scenes, characters, motifs, and symbols that are essential to telling the story of the source text. Then as they watch a film adaptation, they can keep track of how those elements are handled by the film version.

Film as Digest This concept acknowledges that the written text is far more detailed and comprehensive in its ability to set a scene, develop a character, reveal a narrative point of view, or create a symbol. Film works best in developing plot and showing action.

Condensation Due to the “film as digest” phenomenon, characters and events need to be collapsed or composited in order to fit the limitations and conventions of the film adaptation. Students can explore this term by determining which characters can be combined based on their common functions in the text.

Immediacy Viewing a film is a far more “immediate” experience cognitively than reading a book. We decode visual images much faster and more readily than the printed word.



Point of View What many viewers of film fail to comprehend is that the camera can express a point of view, just as the narrator of a written text can and does. Voice-over narrators are seldom used in film, since it seems artificial and intrusive. Point of view in film is visual and subtle.

Here are three ways to express or describe the point of view in a film:

- ✧ **Neutral:** the camera is merely recording events as they happen in a reportorial fashion.
This is the most common shot in filmmaking.
- ✧ **Subjective:** the camera assumes the point of view of one of the character so the viewer sees what the character sees.
- ✧ **Authorial:** the director very deliberately focuses the camera on a feature of a sequence or shot to comment on the action or reveal something.

Shot and Sequence As defined by *Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary*, a “shot” is the “basic unit of film structure or an unbroken strip of film made by an uninterrupted running of the camera.” Think of a shot as a “still” image that is combined with other still images to create a moving picture. A shot captures its subject from a particular distance and angle. The camera can be stationary or moving as it captures its subject. Individual shots then are joined together by the editing process to create a sequence of action.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

Prior to viewing:

- ✧ In order to maintain fidelity to Shakespeare’s play, what are the essential scenes that must be included in an adaptation to cover the basic plot? Considering that film is a digest of the original play, what constitutes the exposition, inciting incident, central conflict, complications, climax, and resolution to represent and streamline the central action?
- ✧ What point of view dominates the play? Who is the central character? Which character has the most soliloquies or asides and might have the strongest relationship with the reader/viewer as a result? How could the viewpoint of the central character or the character that has the most direct connection with the audience be represented through the use of the camera? Or, should the camera maintain a neutral position to reveal the story and the characters?
- ✧ What details does the play provide to guide the casting of principle actors for the central characters? Looking at the text carefully, which details regarding physical appearance, class or behavior should be embodied by an actor to make an immediate impression on the viewer?
- ✧ Which supporting characters are essential to the development of the plot and main characters? Which characters serve the same functions in the story? How might several of those characters be composited in order to condense the story in helpful and necessary ways considering a film will normally be shorter than a stage production?



- ✧ Which central images, motifs, symbols, or metaphors are central to the literary source? How could one or two of these literary techniques be translated into visual or sound techniques to make their impact more immediate in order to support or to replace the play's language? How would they be represented on the screen or through the musical score?

During viewing:

- ✧ How much of the actual dialogue from the play itself is used in a scene?
- ✧ To what extent does the camera work seem unobtrusive, natural or obvious, stylized?
- ✧ Which character(s) appears mostly in one shots?
- ✧ At what point in the scene are two shots used? What is the effect of their use at that point?
- ✧ What is the typical distance (close, medium, long) of the camera to the subject of the shots? To what extent does the manipulation of camera distance make the scene an intimate one or not?
- ✧ To what extent are most of the shots at eye level, slightly above, or slightly below? How do subtle changes in angle influence how the viewer perceives the character in the shot?
- ✧ To what extent does the scene make use of extreme high or low angles? To what effect?
- ✧ To what extent does the camera move? When? What is the effect of the movement?
- ✧ To what extent does the sequence use music? If it does, when do you become aware of the music and how does it set a mood or punctuate parts of the dialogue?

After viewing:

- ✧ Which choices made to condense the events of the play by the screenwriter are the most successful in translating the original text to the screen? Which choices are less successful or satisfying?
- ✧ Which narrative elements (events, characters, key speeches) omitted from the screen adaptation of the play shift the focus of the comedy, tragedy or history in comparison to the original text?
- ✧ If any characters were composited, what was gained or lost by reducing the number of characters or altering the function of a particular character through compositing?
- ✧ Which actors performed their roles in expected and/or unexpected ways? How did the original text dictate how roles such be performed?
- ✧ Which visual elements of the film made the strongest impression on you as a viewer?
- ✧ How did the visuals help draw your attention to an element of plot, a character or a symbol that you might have missed or failed to understand when reading the play?
- ✧ As a reader of the play, how did viewing the film help you to better understand the overall plot, particular character, or specific symbol/theme?



Before you read the play

AS A CLASS

1 Bard Board

Start a bulletin board for *Julius Caesar*, to which you can add as you read and discuss the play. Start by putting up pictures or words that represent anything you know or think about *Julius Caesar* before you start reading. Look for pictures of some of the play's predominant symbols—daggers, blood, soldiers, for example. As you study the play, add images, quotes, current headlines, or poetry that reminds you of characters, events, key objects, words—whatever you feel is relevant to your thoughts about the play. As a class, discuss your additions as you go deeper into the play. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS RL1, RL2, RL4, SL1**

2 Sound & Sense

To the teacher: excerpt 30 lines from the play that are rich in Shakespeare's language or are descriptive of character. Distribute a line or lines to each student on a slip of paper, not revealing the character that spoke it. Look at your line/s and, as you all walk around the room say it aloud again and again—without addressing or looking at anyone. Continue to walk around the room and deliver your line directly to your classmates, as they do the same. Regroup in a circle, each reading your line aloud in turn. Sit down in the circle and discuss the lines. What questions do you have about the words? Imagine what this play is about based on some of the words you've heard its characters speak. What do you imagine about the character who spoke your line? Did you hear lines that seemed to be spoken by the same character? All ideas are encouraged, and none can be wrong! This is your time to listen to the language and begin to use your imagination to think about the world of the play you've just entered. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL1**

3 Get into the Rhythm

Shakespeare often writes in iambic pentameter. Reading Shakespeare can be a lot easier (and a lot more fun) if you get into the rhythm! Take Flavius's first five lines at the opening of *Julius Caesar*, and read them aloud (but on the quiet side) to yourself. Count the number of syllables in each line—there may be one that isn't "a perfect 10." Forming a circle, walk as you read the lines out loud. Let the rhythm of the writing set the pace. You shouldn't think too hard about this, just read the passage and walk in the circle. Allow the rhythm of the writing to affect the pace of your steps. You're walking in iambic pentameter! This is an excellent activity to build fluency. When you get to the end, just pick right up at the beginning again. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARD L3**

COMMON CORE

Last year, Illinois joined the cadre of states to adopt the new Common Core State Standards. You'll notice throughout the Classroom Activities section that we have suggested several Anchor Standards in Reading Literature, Language, Writing, and Speaking and Listening. We have referenced the Anchor Standards so that teachers can apply them as they are relevant to different grade levels. By readily adapting and sometimes extending a suggested activity, its alignment to a specific standard can be strengthened.



IN SMALL GROUPS/PAIRS

4 How Insulting!

In groups of 4–6: Practice aloud—at each other with feeling!—the insults that characters from *Julius Caesar* sling at each other. Find your own or practice with the ones listed here. If the meaning of a word is not clear, don't get stuck! Keep repeating the insult and you'll be closer to the meaning than you might think. Once you've slung quite enough at each other, do it now in turn, and after someone has hurled an insult, it's a race among the rest of you to imagine a contemporary situation that might provoke such a rebuke! **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR**

STANDARDS RL1, RL4, W3, SL1, SL4, L3, L4

<i>You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things! (Marcellus)</i>	1.1.34
<i>His coward lips did from their color fly. (Cassius)</i>	1.2.122
<i>(You) fat, sleek-headed men. (Caesar)</i>	1.2.192-193
<i>He thinks too much: such men are dangerous. (Caesar)</i>	1.2.195
<i>What rubbish and what offal! (Cassius)</i>	1.3.109
<i>(You) fleeing tell-tale! (Casca)</i>	1.3.117
<i>Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough to mask thy monstrous visage? (Brutus)</i>	2.1.80-81
<i>Every man hence to his idle bed. (Brutus)</i>	2.1.117
<i>When I tell him he hates flatterers he says he does, being then most flattered. (Decius)</i>	2.1.207-8
<i>You have some sick offence within your mind. (Portia)</i>	1.2.68
<i>(You have) that which melteth fools—I mean sweet words. (Caesar)</i>	3.1.42
<i>I spurn thee like a cur out of my way. (Caesar)</i>	3.1.46
<i>He shall but bear (these honors) as the ass bears gold. (Antony)</i>	4.1.21
<i>He's a tried and valiant soldier. So is my horse. (Octavius/Antony)</i>	4.1.28-29
<i>I had rather be a dog and bay the moon than such a Roman (Brutus)</i>	4.3.27-28
<i>Have mind upon your health, tempt me no farther! (Cassius)</i>	4.3.36
<i>Must I give way and room to your rash choler? (Brutus)</i>	4.3.37
<i>Shall I be frightened when a madman stares? (Brutus)</i>	4.3.39
<i>Fret till your proud heart break. (Brutus)</i>	4.3.42
<i>I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter, You are waspish. (Brutus)</i>	4.3.48-49
<i>I do not like your faults. (Brutus)</i>	4.3.89
<i>How vividly doth this cynic rhyme! (Cassius)</i>	4.3.133
<i>You showed your teeth like apes and fawned like hounds. (Antony)</i>	5.1.41

5 Shared Lines

Shakespeare's text contained many clues to help his actors, who often had only a few days to rehearse a play. You'll notice that some lines are indented, starting well to the right of other lines. This happens when two speakers share a ten-syllable (sometimes eleven...) verse line. By sharing a line, Shakespeare indicates to his actors that the pace is fast, and the two lines are to be delivered as one. There should be no pause between the end of one character's line and the beginning of the next. Brutus and Lucius share a few lines in 2.1, and so do many of the Plebians in 3.2. First, identify which lines they share. Pair up and read these scenes to one other, each person choosing a part. Whenever a single verse line is split between characters, practice until you get to the point that there is no pause between where one character's line ends and the other's begins. You can also use a ball (like a hot potato!) for this activity to throw back and forth as you toss the lines to each other. **CONSIDER COMMON**

CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS RL1, SL1



6 Creative Definitions

In small groups, leaf through the script to find two words that you're pretty sure will be completely unknown to everyone. Then using the footnotes (or a free online Shakespeare lexicon like www.shakespeareswords.com), look up and write out the definitions. Now as a group, make up two other, completely convincing definitions for each word that your classmates might believe. First, read the line in which the word appears out loud. Then read the three definitions out loud, including the correct one. Then as a class, vote on the definition you think is correct. Often in Shakespeare, the context of the word can lead you to its definition—even words you've never heard before. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, L4, L5**

ON YOUR OWN

7 Make a Connection

One of the reasons Shakespeare's plays haven't disappeared is that his characters experience life as we still do. Before you start reading *Julius Caesar*, it may be helpful to think about your own experiences to help better understand what the characters experience. Jot down some of your ideas about one of the following situations. Don't worry about your writing style. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, R6, W3, W4**

- ✦ Think about a time when you had to choose between a friend's wish and doing what you thought was right. Were you absolutely certain you were doing the right thing? How did it affect your relationship? Looking back, do you feel you could have done something differently?
- ✦ We've all felt envy because someone had something we didn't—a possession, a quality, an achievement, or a person. Think of a time you envied a friend for something they had that you didn't. What was it? How did it make you feel? Did you do anything about it? Did it affect your relationship? How?
- ✦ What are your ambitions, or goals, in life? Taking the one most important to you, what are you willing to do to achieve it? Under what circumstances could a person be said to be "too ambitious," if any?
- ✦ Think of a situation in which you talked yourself into believing that what you wanted to do was really the right thing to do. Was it easy or difficult to rationalize your decision? What were the consequences?
- ✦ Think about fights you've had with people you're close to. Do you believe that an argument can ever strengthen a relationship? Do you think that true friends never deeply disagree? Write about a fight you've had that made a friendship either stronger or weaker.
- ✦ Have you ever been told that you'd be great at something (like a school office) that you know, deep down, was not a good fit for you? How did the person's confidence in you make you feel? Did you end up going against your gut feeling and do it anyway? If so, how did it make you feel—and how did you do?



8 Punctuation Exploration

Read aloud the verse passage below, stripped of all punctuation. Read it again several times aloud, listening for the rhythm and to find the sense of the verse. When you feel you have grasped the meaning, add punctuation and compare with the text. Why did you punctuate where you did? Punctuation and the fundamentals of grammar are some of the tools of the trade for poets and writers, similar to certain carpenter's tools. How does Shakespeare use punctuation to enhance the text? How would other forms or placements of punctuation or capitalization alter what the character is saying? If time allows, try this with other passages. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS RL1, SL1, SL3, SL4, L1, L2, L3**

Brutus **Act 2, Scene 2**

*it must be by his death and for my part
i know no personal cause to spurn at him
but for the general he would be crowned
how that might change his nature there's the question
it is the bright day that brings forth the adder
and that craves wary walking crown him that
and then i grant we put a sting in him
that at his will he may do danger with
th'abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
remorse from power and to speak truth of caesar
i have not known when his affections swayed
more than his reason but 'tis a common proof
that lowliness is young ambition's ladder
whereto the climber—upward turns his face
but when he once attains the upmost round
he then unto the ladder turns his back
looks in the clouds scorning the base degrees
by which he did ascend so caesar may
then lest he may prevent and since the quarrel
will bear no color for the thing he is
fashion it thus that what he is augmented
would run to these and these extremities
and therefore think him as a serpent's egg
which, hatched would as his kind grow mischievous
and kill him in the shell*

9 Assassination Interview

Caesar's assassination caused quite a stir in Rome. Assassinations affect people deeply. Interview someone who remembers an assassination during his/her lifetime. (Osama Bin Laden, JFK, Malcom X, John Lennon, Martin Luther King Jr., Lee Harvey Oswald, Leo Trotsky, Anwar El-Sadat, Harvey Milk, etc.) What does that person remember? How did it affect him/her? Did it change anything about his/her life? Write your findings up in a one-page report, and present them to the class. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL2, SL3, W4, W7**



As you read the play

BELL-RINGERS

These are brief introductory activities to set the stage for class. They are simply 2-5 minute attention-getters and focusers. They can help students connect, create class unity and focus, and simply add some fun to the beginning or end of class. Teams, rewards, and bonus points often heighten focus and enjoyment. Many of these activities work well as class conclusions, substitute teacher activities, and creative full-class activities as well.

AS A CLASS

10 Character Quarantine

To the teacher: Cut up and distribute, one per student, the lines below including the character's name. Once you receive a quote, arrange yourselves in groups based on the character who said your quote. As you read the lines aloud and notice the plot clues in them, work with one another to determine the order of your quotes through the arc of the story. Once you have arranged yourselves, come up with a still-frame position you think your character would assume onstage at the moment he/she says that line. When the teacher says "Go!" everyone assumes their position and reads each line in order. Repeat once more, so your classmates have a good idea of the plot points, as well. Then ask them if they think any of the quotes are out of order. Once everyone agrees they are in order, go down the line and explain your still-frame statues to the class. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR**

STANDARDS R1, R3, SL1

Caesar:

<i>Let me have men about me that are fat,</i>	
<i>Sleek-headed men and such as sleep a-nights.</i>	1.2.192-193
<i>Cowards die many times before their deaths,</i>	
<i>The valiant never taste of death but once.</i>	2.2.32-34
<i>The Ides of March are come.</i>	3.1.1
<i>What is now remiss that Caesar and his Senate must redress?</i>	3.1.32
<i>Et tu, Brute?</i>	3.1.77

Brutus:

<i>Vexèd I am</i>	
<i>Of late with passions of some difference,</i>	
<i>Conceptions only proper to myself,</i>	
<i>Which give some soil, perhaps, to my behaviors.</i>	1.2.39-42
<i>What means this shouting? I do fear the people</i>	
<i>Choose Caesar for their king.</i>	1.2.79-80
<i>O Rome, I make thee a promise,</i>	
<i>If the redress will follow, thou receives</i>	
<i>Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus.</i>	2.1.56-58
<i>All my engagements I will construe to thee,</i>	



All the character of my sad brows. 2.1.307

If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar,

This is my answer: not that I love Caesar less,

But that I loved Rome more. 3.2.18-20

Words before blows; is it so, countrymen? 5.1.27

Antony:

Friends am I with you all, and love you all,

Upon this hope, that you shall give me reasons

Why and wherein Caesar was dangerous. 3.1.220-23

But Brutus says he was ambitious,

And Brutus is an honorable man. 3.2.78-79

And let us presently go sit in counsel,

How covert matters may be best disclosed

And open perils surest answered. 4.2.45-47

Villains! You did not so when your vile daggers

Hacked one another in the sides of Caesar! 5.1.39-40

His life was gentle, and the elements

So mixed in him that Nature might stand up

And say to all the world, 'This was a man!' 5.5.73-75

Cassius:

I was born free as Caesar, so were you. 1.2.97

I fear our purpose is discovered. 3.1.17

Do not consent

That Antony speak in his funeral.

Know you how much the people may be moved

By that which he will utter? 3.1.232-235

O my dear brother!

This was an ill beginning of the night.

Never come such division 'tween our souls! 4.3.233-235

This is my birthday, as this very day,

Was Cassius born. 5.1.71-72

O, coward that I am to live so long

To see my best friend ta'en before my face. 5.3.34-35



11 *Julius Caesar* Today

Do a brief “show-and-tell” presentation connected to the scenes and characters you are studying that day. Each day, what—locally or around the world—makes you think of the play? What connections are you making with *Julius Caesar* and your personal lives as young adults? You as the teacher can select the items, or leave it wide open for imaginative and cultural connections. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, R7, SL4, W7**

12 Key Quote Chant

As a class, choose a key quote to memorize. During the time that you will be studying the play, use the opening minutes of each class to collectively recite it. Use different tones and voice inflections (a western accent, in robust Italian, with a French accent, like Elmer Fudd, in British high style, Cockney, etc...). Say it fast and slow, sing it, chant it, be creative each day—and soon you will know it and have learned it together. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5, L3**

13 Significant Passage Pull

At the end of each act, pull the quote you found that best represents an ongoing theme in the play. In a small group, pick the one you all agree on, and present it to the class. Explain why you chose it and its significance to the play and to you. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R5, SL4**



TEACHER RESOURCE CENTER

If you have an activity or lesson plan that was a classroom success with your students, we want to hear about it! Consider donating your lesson plan to the Teacher Resource Center, and become part of our ever-growing, permanent collection! Need inspiration? If you are looking for the perfect activity or “proven” lesson plan, visit the Center and see what other educators have offered us. **Call the Education Department, 312.595.5678, to make an appointment.**



Act I

AS A CLASS

14 What News?

Whenever we try to figure out why Shakespeare made a particular choice, we're engaged in a highly speculative process—though some hypotheses prove easier to substantiate than others! Scholars have written entire books on the subject of Shakespeare's use of "the report"—when we learn something through a character's report as opposed to seeing it staged. In 1.2, Casca reports to Brutus and Cassius a scene in which Caesar refused the crown three times. As a class, discuss why Shakespeare might have decided to have Casca tell us about this scene rather than letting the audience see Caesar in action. There's no right answer, so the more ideas, the better! **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL1, R1, R8**

IN SMALL GROUPS/PAIRS

15 Hidden Directions

In Shakespeare's time, very few stage directions were written into the script apart from entrances and exits. Directors and their actors must decide on everything else—like tone, emphasis, pause, facial expression, and movement. In 1.1 of *Julius Caesar*, there are many actions implied by the text, like: "Go you down that way towards the Capitol, this way will I..." Look for other lines in this scene that give the actors clues about their actions and movements on stage, and write down your own stage directions. Now in small groups perform this scene for your classmates, incorporating your stage directions and using any necessary props. Compare and contrast various choices. Did some choices work better than others? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, R5, SL1, SL6**

16 Cue Me In

To the teacher: For this exercise, you'll need to make three different transcriptions of 1.2, lines 215-294 ("You pull'd me by the cloak..." to "...Farewell both."). Each copy should include just one character's lines along with cue lines—that is, the line or several words preceding each line for that character. . For example, on one copy only Brutus' lines and cue lines are transcribed. If you wish, you can simply use a thick-tipped black marker to cover up the other characters' lines.

If you've seen the movie *Shakespeare in Love*, you've had a glimpse at how in Elizabethan times playwrights might be finishing a play all the way up to curtain! In a society where pirating plays between rival theater companies was common, the full script existed in only one or two people's hands—and was closely held! Therefore (and also because paper was enormously expensive), actors were not given copies of the entire play, but instead were given copies of their own characters' lines, with a line or so from the end of the speech preceding their own, prompting them when to speak. These were called "cue lines"—and an actor's turn to speak is still known as his "cue." Hav-



ing only his own lines plus a cue line forced an actor to truly listen to his fellow actors. Not only did the actor have to memorize lines this way, he also had to get to know his character—just from his own lines! Divide the class into six groups, each group taking one character's lines, either Brutus, Casca, or Cassius, in 1.2, lines 215-294 (from Caesar's exit to Casca's exit). Choose one member of the group to read aloud any line immediately preceding your character's lines and another member to read that character's lines. What do you learn about your character from what he says in the scene? Are you still able to follow the scene's conversation and action? Now come back together as a class. As one person from each group speaks the character's lines, listen to how the lines resonate differently within the context of the whole scene. Share what you notice about the character your group focused on. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL2, SL4, R3, R5**

17 Borrowed Words

Caesar sat to behold that sport upon the pulpit for orations, in a chair of gold, apparelled in triumphing manner. Antonius, who was consul at that time, was one of them that ran this holy course. So, when he came into the market-place, the people made a lane for him to run at liberty; and he came to Caesar and presented him a diadem wreathed about with laurel. Whereupon there arose a certain cry of rejoicing, not very great, done only by a few appointed for the purpose. But when Caesar refused the diadem, then all the people together made an outcry of joy. Then, Antonius offering it him again, there was a second shout of joy, but yet of a few. But when Caesar refused it again the second time, then all the whole people shouted. Caesar, having made this proof, found the people did not like of it, and thereupon rose out of his chair, and commanded the crown to be carried into Jupiter in the Capitol.

—PLUTARCH

When writing *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare used a translation of the Greek historian Plutarch. Together, one of you using Plutarch, and the other reading the scene from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, identify as many of Shakespeare's alterations, additions and rearrangements as you can. Imagine one of you is an experienced dramatist and the other a trainee dramatist eager to learn. Through questions and answers come to some conclusions about why Shakespeare wrote it as he did. For example: why have Casca reporting the refusal of the crown? Why didn't Shakespeare just show it happening right on stage? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L1, R9**

18 Prose versus Verse

Shakespeare often moves back and forth between prose and verse. It's easy to see on the page: the prose has margins justified on both the left and the right, like an unbroken paragraph text; the verse has shorter lines, justified on the left alone, and with capitalization at the beginning of each new line. There is no hard-and-fast rule that dictates Shakespeare's choice of prose versus verse, but such shifts can signify a character's class, emotional state, or even if he is lying or telling the truth! In 1.2, Casca speaks in prose when he tells Brutus and Cassius about Caesar's refusal of the crown. But in the very next scene, he speaks to Cicero in verse! What could be Shakespeare's reasons for doing this? In small groups, come up with various reasons why you think that Casca uses prose in one scene, and verse in the other. As you read through the play, look for other examples (and there are many) of Shakespeare switching from verse to prose and vice-versa. Each time you see the shift, hypothesize about what Shakespeare might be up to! **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R5, R6**



19 Short Lines

When Shakespeare is using iambic pentameter, he uses 10 or sometimes 11 beats to a line. When he doesn't, the line is called a "short line"—and actors pay attention to it for lots of reasons. If the short line isn't followed by another short line, but is followed instead by another full line of verse, the actor knows he's supposed to "do something" to fill out the rest of the line's 10 beats. These breaks often occur at moments of crucial importance. "Beware the Ides of March" is one such line. It only contains six syllables. In your group, discuss why Shakespeare might have broken his rhythm the second time the Soothsayer makes this statement. What's the significance of this line in particular? Why might Caesar have paused before his response? Play Act 1, Scene 2, lines 12-24 ("Caesar!" to "He is a dreamer..."), taking turns playing Caesar. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL1, SL6, R5**

20 Superstitious Sayings

Old superstitions are grounded in the unpredictable behavior of animals and the weather. You may have heard the saying, "Red sky at morning, sailor take warning." Or if a groundhog sees its shadow on February 2, there will be six more weeks of winter. With a partner, discuss some other weather or animal-related superstitions that you know. Create your own—and be prepared to explain just why your superstition might seem believable! **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R4, SL4**

21 What's a Conspiracy

Look up the word "conspiracy" in the dictionary. In your small group, discuss whether you believe that there are ever good reasons for conspiring to kill a ruler or to overthrow a government. Brutus believed that the act of murder would benefit Rome. Does a noble end sometimes justify less-than-noble means? Are there good reasons for the conspiracy against Caesar? Back up your opinions with examples. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L4, R4, SL4**

ON YOUR OWN

22 Character Diary

Choose a character to follow throughout the play. Pretending you are that character, create a personal diary. Your daily entries might focus on how the other characters feel about you, and how you feel about them. What do you wish to do, or wish you had done, or hope will happen? Use text references and lines to supplement your journaling and personal thoughts. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L1, W3, W10**

23 Who Is Julius Caesar?

In 1.2, Brutus and Cassius describe Caesar's refusal of the crown. Write down everything you discover about Caesar from their exchange. Compare these assumptions to how you view him after Act 2. How about at the end of the play? If you register a shift in your assumptions, make a note of exactly when—and why. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, W3, W4**



24 This Just In!

At the end of Act 1, review the action so far and, by using no more than ten quick “sound bites,” summarize what’s happened. You can either use newspaper-type headlines to grab our attention, or better yet, use rap or rhyme to encapsulate Act 1. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R3, SL4**

25 Love, Hate and Popularity

You have not met Julius Caesar. In the opening scene, it is obvious that the characters possess different views of this leader. Marullus and Flavius consider him a threat. But many citizens think he is a great ruler. Think of reasons why people hold different views about the same person. What factors might influence their opinions? Choose a well-known person who has lived during the past 50 years—one who is admired by some people and hated by others. You may choose a politician, musician, actor, business leader, sports star, etc. Give two differing opinions of this person and tell why they vary so. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL1, SL4**

Act 2

AS A CLASS

26 Interview Calphurnia

Calphurnia is one of the great roles in *Julius Caesar*, but she’s given very few words. Fully aware of the danger to her husband, she is unable to make him listen to her fears. As a class, interview a classmate who agrees to speak as Calphurnia (and it doesn’t have to be a girl). How does Calphurnia feel, for example, when her husband announces in public that she’s barren? When he dismisses her dreams? Does she feel that Caesar respects her? How much does she actually suspect about the assassination? Use the text as your evidence to support your portrayal. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L1, R3, SL3**

27 To Cut or Not to Cut?

Practically every Shakespeare film and staged production cuts the text—sometimes by a line here and there, and sometimes by entire sections. If you had to cut one or two entire scenes from Act 2 to make your production of *Julius Caesar* shorter than the three-or-so hours it takes to perform the play in its entirety, which scene would you cut? Why? Would anything be lost by the cutting of it? Anything gained? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R5**



IN SMALL GROUPS/PAIRS

28 Why “No” to Pact?

Cassius never gets to make his pact in 2.1 (“And let us swear our resolution”). In groups of three, discuss what it might have been and write it down (no more than two lines). Share your version of his oath with the rest of the class. This may give you some ideas about Cassius and the conspiracy. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W3**

29 Justify the Assassination

In 2.1, Metellus sees that the conspirators have a public image problem (“...his silver hairs will purchase us a good opinion...”), and so does Brutus (“Our course will seem too bloody...”). Brutus shows the conspirators how to think of their task in a high-minded way. But he doesn’t explain how to help the general public think of the assassination in the same way. Spin! In groups of four or five, form a public relations firm sympathetic to the conspirators’ cause. You have secretly been asked to prepare a ‘package,’ using all modern forms of media at your disposal, to give an immediate explanation and justification of the assassination. Outline a PR campaign that will convince everybody that Caesar’s death is the best thing for Rome. Provide such detail (posters, slogans, etc.) as you think necessary. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R2, R7, W4**

30 No Words

As one person reads Portia’s lines in 2.1 (“...yesternight at supper / You suddenly rose and walked about), action by action and pausing after each, two others act out the scene without a sound, as you might watch it through a window. (This same activity can be used with Casca’s report of Caesar’s refusal of the crown in 1.2.) **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L1, R1, SL2**

31 Gossip

Lucius probably knows as little as Portia does about what’s going on, but has watched the Conspirators coming and going. He must have sensed the atmosphere, seen expressions on faces, observed how people moved, heard the tone of their voices. In groups of three or four, improvise a conversation Lucius holds with the other slaves the next morning, describing the night. The slaves ask many questions and have plenty of ideas about what it all means. They may get it right—or they may not! **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, SL6**

32 Third Person

Caesar often refers to himself not as ‘I’ or ‘me,’ but as ‘Caesar.’ In groups of four, try holding a conversation where you always refer to yourself by your last name. Topics can range from what you had for breakfast to your grandest personal ambitions. Afterwards, talk together about the effect it had on your conversation; then discuss why you think Caesar does it. Create a tableau (a wordless picture using your bodies as statues to convey the image you have in mind) dramatizing how Caesar sees himself. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R4**



33 Choices

Lines in scripts such as Shakespeare's can be interpreted in different ways to convey different meanings. The thought that accompanies the spoken line is called the "subtext." In playing a role, an actor must constantly be making decisions about what he thinks his subtext is in order to bring a certain mood, tone, inflection, and pace to the line. In small groups, practice saying "good morning" to one another to express the context of:

- ✧ I can't possibly talk to you right now. I'm in a hurry.
- ✧ I'm so glad to see you.
- ✧ You're the 200th person my job has required me to say "good morning" to already.
- ✧ I'm not pleased to see you after the fight we had last night.
- ✧ I'm very pleased to see you after the romantic evening we spent together...

Now go back to Antony's funeral speech in 3.2 and practice saying "Brutus is an honorable man" to express the context of:

- ✧ He is my best friend.
- ✧ He broke my heart.
- ✧ I aspire to be him.
- ✧ I hate this guy more than the wrath of a thousand suns.
- ✧ He has done something wrong, and I love him for it.
- ✧ He has just murdered my best friend.

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R4

34 Stormy Weather

Shakespeare often uses effects of light and weather to suggest the mood of a scene. In today's theater, light and sound are used as special effects to help create the mood. You are in charge of the sound and lighting boards. Both are calibrated on a scale of 0-10. Your task is to plot the sound and light effects to reflect changes in the characters and action, as well as the weather and time of day. In pairs, plot the lights and sound from the beginning of Act 1, scene 3 to Portia's entrance in Act 2, scene 1. What sounds might you use? Remember that the speed with which sound and lights are brought up or down is as important as how intense they are. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R4, SL1**



35 Brutus versus Hamlet

Brutus is often seen as a kind of prototype for Shakespeare's other vacillating intellectual, Hamlet. Working in pairs, one of you will study Brutus' s monologues in 2.1.10-85 ("It must be by his death..." to "...to hide thee from prevention." Cut Lucius from the scene.) The other takes Hamlet's "Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I" speech in 2.2.502-605. Like Brutus, Hamlet must make a choice to act against a man he considers a tyrant; in his case, it is his uncle, Claudius (who also murdered Hamlet's father and married his mother).

How do Brutus and Hamlet work themselves up to taking action? Go through your part, underlining all the phrases which you think show your character's indecision. Circle phrases which show your character working toward or making a decision to act. Be on the lookout for words which may indicate a change in feeling or logic-like "but" or "and." When specifically in the text does each character make his decision?—mark it with an asterisk. Now perform the soliloquies for each other. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L1, R3, R9**

- ✦ What are their dominant feelings?
- ✦ What similarities do you see between them? What differences?
- ✦ Can you guess, based on these two speeches, how each play will end?

ON YOUR OWN

36 Conspiracy

The symbol for Justice is blindfolded and holds a sword and a pair of scales. Time has a long white beard, a scythe and an hourglass. Such 'emblems' or 'figures' were very popular in Shakespeare's day. Study lines 78-85 in 2.1 ("They are the faction..." to "...hide thee from prevention."), then create an emblem for Conspiracy. You can draw it, write about it, or even embody it! **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R4, W9**

37 Prompts

Directors and stage managers use "prompt books," or scripts with line and technical notes, to keep track of what should be happening on stage. Make a photocopy of 2.2. Glue the sheet in the middle of a legal-size piece of paper, turned on its side. On the right hand side, write in red suggestions to the actors concerning how the lines should be said. On the left side, in another color, write suggestions to the stage manager about lighting and sound effects. You can also make any "blocking" notes about where you think the characters should be moving on stage. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, W2**



Act 3

AS A CLASS

38 Taking Sides

Imagine that you are reporters at a press conference following Caesar's funeral. Some of you work for the Republican newspaper, some of you work for the Caesarian newspaper. Devise questions to ask Antony and Brutus. How would a Republican-friendly reporter phrase questions to Brutus? To Antony? How might a Caesarian reporter? Appoint a Brutus and Antony to answer your questions in character. What headlines might the differing newspapers print the next morning? How might the different sides choose to represent the mob's reaction to Caesar's death? Is it possible for a reporter to be truly objective in telling this story? Was Shakespeare? **CON-**

SIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, SL3, W3

39 Objection, Your Honor!

Imagine that the conspirators are going to be tried for Caesar's murder. Prepare a mock trial for your class. First, divide up roles. Choose who will play the conspirators, the prosecution and defense lawyers. Select witnesses for each side, and name a judge. The rest of the class will act as the jury. Before the courtroom drama takes place, participants should prepare for their roles in the trial. Give each participant a brief description of his character and role. The description should explain what will happen in the trial and explain the characters' involvement in the tragic events. The defense attorney should list the arguments that the Conspirators might use to justify or excuse their actions. The prosecuting attorney should also have reasons that prove their actions cannot be justified. At the end of the trial, have the jury vote. Finally, the judge should deliver the appropriate sentence. **CONSIDER COM-**

MON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R8, SL3

40 Convince Me

Try your hand at public speaking. Work as a whole class. Go outside or to a large room and find a place that can be used as a forum for public speeches. Set up one or two temporary platforms for your speakers. Some will be speakers, and some will be the audience. Take turns making speeches. Once you have had a few practice speeches, then have two speeches delivered simultaneously! The audience will decide who they listen to. They can, of course, move from one to the other, and will probably not listen in silence, but will express their own individual viewpoints. Select from these topics or make up your own:

- ✧ Smoking should be completely banned
- ✧ College entrance should be based on GPA, not standardized tests
- ✧ Wearing school uniforms restricts individuality
- ✧ Grades should be abolished and replaced by pass/fail
- ✧ The driving age should be raised to 18 years old



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Spend some time discussing what happened and how it felt to be a speaker and/or an audience member. What made you want to listen to a speaker? How did you feel about the others when they were in opposition to your views? How did it feel when others around you responded vocally? What did the reactions from the audience make you do as a speaker? Now, examine both Brutus's and Antony's speeches. Select one person to make each of these speeches to the class. Spend some time discussing which speech is more powerful and why. You will notice that one speech is in prose and the other in verse. Discuss together the effects of this difference on their audience. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R9, SL3, SL4**

41 Images

Shakespeare uses heightened language to convey the meaning of a line or phrase—and Antony's speech is full of it! Take the line, "O pardon me thou bleeding piece of earth." Stand up in a circle around the room. The group leader reads Antony's speech slowly and clearly. The group's task is to mime as best it can every single image people can picture. Just in the first two lines, "bleeding piece of earth," meek," "gentle," and "butchers" all deserve a different mime. Take time to mime each separate image, and repeat words and phrases if you don't immediately spot the potential for an image in, say, "tide of times." Afterwards, discuss what images came up, whether some contrasted strongly with others, whether you notice any progression. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L4, L5**

42 What's in a Mob?

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the scene in which Cinna the Poet is murdered was often omitted in performance. But in *Julius Caesar* the general populace plays a more significant part than in any other Shakespeare play. Discuss the qualities of a mob. What is true of mobs that might not be true of individuals? Imagine you are an actor in the show, prepare your argument on why this particular scene should or should not be included in your performance. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W1**

IN SMALL GROUPS/PAIRS

43 Do You Copy?

We all use repetition in everyday life to make our words more emphatic. "I'm really, really mad at you," carries stronger meaning than "I'm mad at you." Shakespeare uses repetition in all of his plays to emphasize the point, or draw special attention to a word or phrase. In Antony's funeral oration, you will find five or six key words and phrases (such as "honorable") repeated frequently. In pairs find some of Antony's repetitions. Why might Shakespeare have chosen to repeat these words or phrases? Does the repetition tell us anything about the character of Antony and/or what he is communicating in this speech? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, W9**



44 Who Do You Think You Are?

Stream of consciousness activities help to explore a character's hidden thoughts at a particular moment in the play. Pair up and sit facing your partner. One person is Julius Caesar, the other Brutus at the moment Caesar says, "Et tu, Brute." You have five minutes to write, entirely free form, whatever words or thoughts you imagine are going through your character's mind at this moment. Don't stop to think. Just keep writing until time is up. It is often helpful if the first word is "I." The exercise works particularly well if the moment before you start writing, each Caesar looks each Brutus in the eye and says his line with feeling. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R3, W10**

ON YOUR OWN

45 The Unspoken Speech

Historically, according to Plutarch's account, Cassius spoke to the crowd after Caesar's death, though Shakespeare chooses not to follow his source at this point in the play. Write the speech that you believe Cassius might have made. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W3, W9**

46 Rhetorical Devices at Work

Study the devices used by Antony to sway the crowd in his funeral oration. Think of an issue in which you believe strongly. Using the same techniques as Antony, write a persuasive speech to convince your fellow students of your position on this issue. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, R6, W1**



Act 4

AS A CLASS

47 Whose Call?

Look at 4.1 (“The Proscription Scene”). This scene has frequently been cut by directors interested in trying to improve Antony’s image in the play. Again, split the class into two groups, actors and directors. This time, however, the actors want this scene cut and the directors want it in. Why would an actor playing Antony want this scene cut? Could you choose to cut only part of it? If so, what would you cut? What function does this scene serve in the script? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, R5, SL3**

48 Leveling Powers

As Act 4 opens, the three members of the Triumvirate are jockeying for position, but some are more successful than others! On stage, power and status are communicated by nonverbal cues, as well as verbal ones. We know that the opening of Act 4 is dripping with verbal insinuations, but what about the possibilities of the nonverbal messages these men dish out? In your class, place three chairs around a table or desk, and another three (ones sturdy enough to stand on, please!) a bit apart. The floor, desk and chair represent different symbolic levels of status for this activity. With three volunteers taking the roles of Antony, Lepidus and Octavius, read through 4.1, lines 1-40 once, standing but not moving.

On the second reading, keep your voices controlled, and really focus on your character’s nonverbal messages. Using levels, posture and body movements, communicate to one another as you read through the passage again—and again. Specifically where in the text does your character have to move? When you speak? In response to someone else? Remember that this isn’t meant to be a realistic performance: if someone stands up on a chair, it’s not the character climbing on a chair; it’s the character taking a place of superiority. Be extreme in your cues and try a lot of different choices before pulling them back and applying your favorite newfound interpretation to the way you now read the passage. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L1, R3, R4**

IN SMALL GROUPS/PAIRS

49 Who Is Lepidus?

Poor Lepidus... He’s pretty much the whipping boy of the Triumvirate. But the actor playing Lepidus does have some leeway in shaping his character. Is he the person Octavius describes or quite another, as perceived by Antony? In groups of three, read through Scene 1, lines 1-40 (up to “And now, Octavius”). Then go back to the first eleven lines through Lepidus’s exit, and take turns playing him—each time, shaping your reading based on the completely opposite opinions held by the other two men. Go to the edge with it! The actors do in rehearsal, and then pull back their performances after discovering things about their characters. What could be implied about the interpretations of Antony and Octavius through the way that Lepidus is played? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L1, R3, SL1**



50 Basic Text Work

Some (including director Jonathan Munby) look at the fight between Cassius and Brutus as *Julius Caesar*'s most deeply personal and raw moment. The argument seems to start in the realm of politics, but it leads to a very personal place about the friendship between these two men. In pairs, prepare to read aloud 4.3, lines 63-108 ("Do not presume too much upon my love" to "Be angry as you will, it shall have scope"). First, go through and score the text as actors do: mark any repetitions (words or phrases you see repeated) and any antitheses (words or phrases with opposite meanings to one another). Also, note where your characters share lines: between both of your characters, you share the beats of a ten- (sometimes eleven-) syllable line. Shared lines tell actors not to pause because, between the two of them, they are really speaking one line. They're easy to see on the page: the second line is deeply indented, starting in the middle of the page! Shakespeare uses shared lines when his characters are feeling intensely and speaking very fast—maybe because they're angry, or because they're in love, or because they're scared. Having "scored" your text, you're ready to take a first stab at reading it aloud with your partner. When you get to repetitions and antitheses, try emphasizing the words. When you see a shared line, take up your cue FAST. All of these are clues the actors use to help them begin to break apart the text. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R5**

51 Ghostly Vision

In pairs, pretend you are co-directing *Julius Caesar*. Discuss how you will present Caesar's ghost in 4.3. How will the ghost look? How will the audience understand that this is a ghost? What mechanical or magical devices do we have at our disposal in the twenty-first century to build on your creativity? What is the tone and mood of the scene? What is the lighting and music like? Sketch out your plans to present to the class as if they were your cast. ROUGH pencil drawings are perfectly acceptable, and not at all unusual at designer's meetings at Chicago Shakespeare Theater! Watch for this scene when you attend the production. After you have seen it, discuss how Chicago Shakespeare Theater's director, Jonathan Munby, approached this scene. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, SL5, W9**

52 A "Duel-ogue" Attack

Shakespeare used duologues—the conversations between two people—to heighten a play's intensity and to reveal information about each character and about the complexity of the relationship between them. Often the two are left alone together on stage. The duologue can have the feel of a duel between two combatants whose "swords" are their words. Working in pairs, take the duologue between Brutus and Cassius in 4.3.1-123 (to "...and leave you so."). Explore the movement of the scene by standing up and each taking a part. As you read your lines, try to get a feel for the way the duologue positions you for attack and retreat. The lines, like two swords, "cut and thrust." At what point specifically is the conflict at its highest tension? At what line is the tension released? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, R5**



53 Double-take

In 4.3 Brutus gives Cassius the devastating news that Portia is dead—but moments later, he responds to Messala's report of Portia's death as though it were news to him. Why? Some scholars believe this split is evidence of an earlier draft of the play which Shakespeare later cut. For this reason the second announcement of Portia's death by Messala is often cut in performance. Other scholars, however, have suggested that Shakespeare was very intentional in his writing here. In small groups, read the scene with and without Messala's report. Try reading it several times, interpreting it differently each time. Ask yourself:

- ✦ How does the second announcement affect the way we see Brutus? What might he be trying to do?
- ✦ How would he act during the second announcement?
- ✦ How might Cassius react? Is he surprised? Does he just go along with it?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R3, W9

ON YOUR OWN

54 Friendship or Flattery?

"A friend should bear his friend's infirmities, / But Brutus makes mine greater than they are."

In 4.2, the fury that is unleashed between two friends is bitter, painful, and intense. Cassius feels assaulted by his friend's criticisms. We've all been hurt deeply by the critical eye of people we care most about. Cassius contends that Brutus is focused too much on his faults when, as a friend, he should be overlooking them. Brutus replies to him that a flatterer, not a friend, would overlook someone's faults. What do you think? Are you more likely to overlook a fault in a close friend, or dwell on it because it upsets you? Have you had a friend who was quick to let you know what was wrong with you instead of what he/she liked about you? What does this dynamic say about a friendship? After thinking about your own experience with a friend that reminds you of Cassius's complaint to Brutus, go back to this exchange between the two men and try your hand at writing it—in your own words, and with whatever outcome you choose. What escalates the fight? What ends it? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE AN-**

CHOR STANDARDS R3, W3

55 A Wife's Perspective

Portia and Calphurnia do not appear on stage again after Caesar's death. Write a scene in which one (or both) of the women reacts to the assassination and the turmoil that follows. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W3, W9**



Act 5

AS A CLASS

56 Make the Cut

Act 5 is not the easiest act to stage in the theater. It jumps from place to place, and it's filled with armies, horses, plus characters we hardly know. Almost never is a Shakespeare play staged or filmed without a number of cuts to the script. (Apparently, according to scholars of Renaissance theater practice, this was also true in Shakespeare's own day.) So, if you're a director staging *Julius Caesar*, you may really think about cutting out chunks of Act 5. If you choose to cut out the short Scene 2, do you lose information essential to the story? Or is there a way that your audience will pick up that information even without Scene 2? You'll have to read further into the scene to make a good argument either way! And what do you do about that hill that Titinius needs? (In the abstract, symbolic 2001 Italian production, *Giulio Cesare*, Titinius took one step up to a four-inch mound of dirt on the stage.) And assuming you won't have horses on your stage, what do you do with all the equine language? Cut it? Change it? Keep it and deal with it representationally? (And you'll soon be able to compare your decisions with those made by Director Jonathan Munby in CST's production.) **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5, SL4**

IN SMALL GROUPS/PAIRS

57 Destructive Duo

Just like real people in our own lives, Antony and Octavius have two very different ways of arguing, and they do it—a lot. Go back to the opening of Act 4, as well as taking another look at the way each approaches an argument in 5.1 (with each other and then with Cassius). With your partner, do a bit of dissecting of their styles. Then in pairs, come up with a good verbal fight—one person arguing as Antony does, the other, like Octavius. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R1**

58 Between the Lines

While reading Shakespeare's plays, it can be like detective work searching out all the hidden meanings, innuendos, and double entendres that can be found "lurking" in the text. Shakespeare was famous for weaving in these gems in all of his plays. When you first read the angry banter between Cassius, Antony and Brutus (5.1 from "Antony..." to "And very wisely..."), it may just sound like a bunch of meaningless words hurled at one another. In groups of three, read it aloud once. Now return to the lines and really accentuate those words or phrases that you suspect could have an alternative meaning. What are these men doing with their words? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R1, SL1**



59 This Is My Birthday

In the heat of battle, Cassius turns to one of the soldiers and tells him that it's his birthday. It's an odd, rather personal bit of information, given the circumstances. Birthdays are important days loaded with meaning—and apparently that's not a new phenomenon unique to us in modern times. So why does Shakespeare put these words in Cassius's mouth? What's the character feeling? What is the playwright saying about the character? Why Cassius and not, say, Brutus? (No fair taking into account historical accuracy into this discussion!) If you're the actor playing Cassius, what might this one small statement tell you about the way you might approach your character from the very start? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, W9**

60 Sound It Out

Antony's and Octavius's speeches close the play and, true to form, they each say pretty much what you'd expect from each of them. But what exactly gives us that impression? Partly it's what they say, but partly it's the sound of what they say, the words they choose and the way they come together in a sentence. In pairs, work on speaking the last fourteen lines of the play. Emphasize the vowel sounds. Emphasize the consonants, and emphasize one-syllable words when they appear together by slowing down and speaking in staccato. What do you discover about Antony's speech versus Octavius's? And knowing the two characters as you do now, how does the speech pattern that Shakespeare gives each of them reflect their personalities? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R4, R6**

61 Stage Battle

How can a battle be portrayed on stage? The stage direction '*Alarum*' means a loud battle noise of drums, trumpets, voices, and clashing weapons. In groups of 8-10, use all resources available to make the sound effects between Scenes 1 and 2. While some work out sound, others work on the staging. Restrict yourselves to the four named characters, or bring on a host of soldiers. Have the whole field of battle in mind when you plot entrances and exits. Show their contrasting moods as you feel appropriate. All this will take careful organization, but it will tell you a great deal about Shakespeare's stagecraft. You could plan it in the classroom and then act it out in a larger space. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R7, SL1**

62 Is Mercy the Way to Go?

Octavius shows mercy to all of Brutus's followers when he spares their lives. Julius Caesar also showed clemency to the followers of Pompey after he had defeated them, including Brutus and Cassius. Is Octavius making a mistake? In groups of four, two take the part of Octavius. The others play advisers who are not happy with Octavius's decision. Debate who is right. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL3, SL4**



ON YOUR OWN

63 “Error’s” Personality

Shakespeare and his contemporaries had a way of representing an idea or concept as a person (“personification”). In *Henry IV Part 2*, he actually creates a character called “Rumor” and gives it lines; in *The Winter’s Tale*, he does the same for “Time.” Here in *Julius Caesar*, he doesn’t make “Error” into a speaking part, but he definitely paints a vivid picture through Messala’s reference in 5.3. In lines 69-71, he says “O error, soon conceived, Thou never com’st unto a happy birth But kill’st the mother that engendered thee.” If you had to create a character that looked like Error, what would it look like? What would Error wear? Write a story about Error meeting someone along the road—perhaps the ghost of Cassius or Caesar, perhaps Truth, perhaps Antony. **CONSIDER COMMON**

CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, W3, W9

64 Fallen Idol

There are many stories about notable men and women who fall into disgrace through some fault of their own, as Brutus did. Find a modern story about such a person. Choose from newspaper reports, movies, novels, songs, plays, or TV shows. First explain this person’s situation. Then compare him or her to Brutus in a written essay.

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R9, W2, W9

After you’ve read the play

AS A CLASS

65 JC Jeopardy

To the teacher: This activity works well as a review session. It is set up like the TV game show, and does take some preparation—but it goes more quickly than you would think! A few students can set up the game for extra credit. First, choose several categories. For example: Caesar, Brutus, The Wives, Quotes, etc. Then leaf through the text and find several bits of information and creative facts to use as “answers”— eight per category, or more. The more specific and exclusive the information is, the less ambiguous the game will be. Organize the “answers” by range of difficulty and create a point value sheet. An overhead projector sheet works well for this, then the whole class can see the categories being marked off as the game progresses. Divide the class into a few teams. A student from the team chooses a category: “The answer is...Brutus’s young servant.” The student answers in the form of a question to try to win the points: “Who is Lucius?” A correct “question” wins the points for the group. It is then the next group’s turn to choose a category, and so on. If the student is wrong, don’t give the correct “question,” because when the next group chooses a category—they can choose the same one if they wish. The more exclusive the information is, the fewer options the students will have to develop multiple correct “questions” for the “answer.” **CONSIDER COMMON CORE STANDARDS RL1, L1**



66 Circle Storytelling

This is a good refresher after you've read the play and are about to start discussing it. Stand in a circle and choose a leader from among your classmates. The leader begins the plot of *Julius Caesar* from the beginning, and describes the action of the play in detail until he either can't think of what comes next or she has named three plot points (whichever comes first!). The story passes to the right, and each person adds the next few actions. You can use the act-by-act synopsis in this handbook as a reference. Continue around the circle until you have told the whole story. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, SL4**

67 The Ball's in Your Court

Ask the class to think of a few trivia questions about *Julius Caesar*. Come up with questions like: "What are the names of the members of the Triumvirate?" and "What finally convinces Brutus to join the conspirators?" Choose a leader to stand in the middle of a circle, with the rest of the class standing around him/her, passing a small ball around in clockwise direction. When the leader says, "Stop," the person who has the ball has to answer the leader's question about the play before the ball makes it back around the circle. If you don't answer the question correctly by the time the ball makes its way around the circle, you take the leader's place inside the circle—and start thinking of questions! Hint: It's helpful to write down a list of them beforehand! **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R7**

68 Charades

Each person writes down a single event from the play on a note card. Separate into two large teams and combine your event cards with the others on your side. One person from Team A will start with a card made by the opposite team, such as "Calphurnia pleads for Caesar to stay home." That person has to act out the event without speaking until his team guesses correctly. Then it's Team B's turn. Each person get two minutes to act out an event and the team scores one point for each correct answer. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL2**

69 Recorded Reactions

To the teacher: Begin class with brief clips from movies or TV shows to stimulate class discussion. A number of *Julius Caesar* productions are available (see sidebar to "Performance History"). But don't limit yourself! For example, you could show battle scenes from *Braveheart* or *Saving Private Ryan* and discuss the characters' reactions to war. Or look for movies depicting assassination, mob violence, or riots. Tape a current news program. Ask your students to come in with clips they think connect—great for compare-and-contrast discussions. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R7, R9, SL2**



IN SMALL GROUPS/PAIRS

70 Dream Team

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's casting director is responsible for finding the right person for every character you see on our stage—no small task! After you've read the play, think about each character—how do they look, sound, move, and behave? Think of television and film celebrities who fit your image of the character and, in groups, discuss who your “dream team” would be for your version. Since it's all fantasy, you might choose a blend of two or more people. Your vision of Brutus might be the physical appearance of Jude Law mixed with the brooding thoughtfulness of Ryan Gosling. Now start clipping out magazines and to create your perfect cut-out cast! Then present your cast to the other groups, using evidence from the text to explain why you made each decision, and compare your ideas with everybody else's. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS RL1, RL2, RL3**

71 E! True Hollywood Story

Often the actors you see on stage will imagine the life of their characters outside of the play in order to get into the role and add “flesh to the bones” of the character. “Creating a back-story” helps make the character feel more real—both to the actor and to us. It is fully hypothetical and subjective, but hopefully well informed by a thorough understanding of the text and its characters. Choose a character, and imagine that it is now ten years after the action of the play. Write an article about the course your character's life has taken. How old are you now? What are your current activities? Have you led a difficult life, or a charmed one? Why? What's your outlook on life now? What factors have led to your outlook on life as reflected in the play? How did Caesar's death affect your life? Root your work as much as possible in clues from the text. Discuss your profile in small groups or pairs. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W3, W9**

72 Extra! Extra!

Based on the scenes you are studying, create a newspaper for Rome. Creative sections can be: local news, world news, obituaries, advice columns, entertainment, sports, business, personals, classified ads, political cartoons, etc. In small groups develop and design your newspaper. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W4, W9**

73 Shakespeare on the Spot

As a group, generate five questions that you would ask William Shakespeare about his play if you could. Pass your group's questions to the group next to you. Now as a small group, role-play William Shakespeare, and attempt to answer another group's questions. Of course, your answers will be purely speculative, but you should root your answers in the text or historical fact as much as possible. Share some of the most interesting questions and answers from each group with the rest of your class. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, SL1**



74 Consumer Profiling

Nowadays, advertisers categorize us by “consumer profiling.” Judge where the characters in *Julius Caesar* would fit in today’s society. Define them by the products they would use if they were alive today. What kind of car would Brutus drive? What music would Portia listen to? What ads would be targeted to Cassius? Support your “profile” with evidence from the text about the character! **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W3, W9**

75 SuperShortShakespeare

Split the class into five groups, each group taking one act of the play. Using only lines from the script, produce a three-minute version of your act. When you are ready, put each of the five acts together to produce a 15-minute version of the whole play. To mix it up a bit, perform each act using a different genre—soap opera, mystery, western, Broadway musical, etc. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R2, W3, W5, SL1**

ON YOUR OWN

76 Summarizing Shakespeare

Imagine that a friend is coming to see *Julius Caesar* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater and she has not read any of the play. You have one minute on the bus to teach her everything you’ve learned about the play. What will you include? What seems most important for her to know? Deliver your one-minute summary of the plot to your class.

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R2

77 What’s in a Name?

Although Julius Caesar dies in Act 3, Shakespeare titled his play *Julius Caesar*. Why do you think Shakespeare chose Caesar’s name for his drama? Do you agree with the playwright’s choice? If you had to pick another title for this play, what would you choose? Be able to defend your title with evidence and examples from the text.

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL4, W9

78 Collage

Create a collage that shows the different aspects of *Julius Caesar* that are presented in this play. Cite the lines which inspired your portrayal as caption(s). **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL5**



Preparing for the performance

AS A CLASS

79 Great Expectations

Before seeing the production, individually or as a class, create a list of expectations and what you hope to see when you watch Chicago Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. After the show, discuss whether or not your views about the play or any of the characters changed. If so, how? Try to be very specific about moments in the action that affected you. **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL2, W9**

80 Justify Your Movement

Part of the actor's job is learning why his character does what he does. Everything from taking a sip of water to sitting down is carefully thought through by both performer and director. Clear some space in your classroom and pull one chair out into the open space. First, move the chair around with no motivation or reason in mind. Now try moving your chair as Caesar might, or Brutus, or Calphurnia—as any of the characters from *Julius Caesar* might perform such a task. Now move the chair again as if this same character were angry, in love, or depressed. Using their personalities to inform your movements, notice how much more interesting it is to simply move a chair when you're concentrating on how another person might do it. When you watch the production at Chicago Shakespeare, keep an eye out for how and why the actors do these simple tasks and see what it tells you about their characters. How does the text support these decisions? Are there times when you would argue that these staging decisions are not supported by the text? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R6**

IN SMALL GROUPS/PAIRS

81 The Director's Chair

Designers play a critical role in the interpretation of a play. The decisions they make about costume, set design, props, sound, and music must work logically in conjunction with the director's vision of the production. The visual and tactile elements of the costumes and the sets help set the mood for the audience watching the play, as do sounds and music. What do you think *Julius Caesar*'s Rome is like? In what time period will you set the play? What pace and style of music will accompany the scenes? Use magazines, catalogues and the Internet to find ideas and pictures, as well as the "Performance History" essay from this handbook to help you.



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- ✧ **Costumes:** In small groups, design costumes for *Julius Caesar*—you need not be artists! Take several pieces of cardboard or poster-board, swatches of fabric, pencils, markers, and paper with which to sketch out your ideas. The sketches can be very rough, and you can stick the fabrics to the poster-board with staples, pins, or glue. Aim to create one costume for every character in the play. As a class, build a “production costume board.” To the teacher: To build on this exercise, students can bring in articles of clothing and/or accessories or explore a thrift store for costume pieces that could be hung on the walls or used for group presentations during the study of the play.
- ✧ **Setting:** Many directors take a traditional approach aiming to set Shakespeare’s plays as they imagine it to be played in Elizabethan England. In the world of theater, there are no rules about how to present a Shakespearean play. What time period will you choose? What is Rome like? What do you want your audience to see when they first enter the theater? What colors will you use? What mood do you want to create? Is there a particular landscape you want to represent?
- ✧ **Sound and Music:** Would you like to incorporate any sound and/or music into your version of *Julius Caesar*? Brainstorm adjectives, mood ideas and songs that come to mind. Make a list of songs and/or music that you think might fit your ideas for the play.

Present your ideas to the class—all ideas are welcome when designing a play! As a class, discuss the implications of the decisions made by the groups. What impact would certain designs have on specific audiences? How would audiences respond to specific characters based simply on how they look? How could a single costume, a style of design or a piece of music affect the interpretation and presentation of the play as a whole? Once you’ve thought through your own ideas about the production’s design elements, you’ll have the chance to compare them with those that director Jonathan Munby and his design team have made. In your mind, which worked particularly well, and why? Which in your mind were less successful—and why? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS RL1, RL2, SL1, SL2, SL4, SL5**

82 Extra! Extra!

Often, a director will choose to “theatricalize” the play’s opening moments, portraying a scene (usually without text) that helps draw the audience into the play. Scholars call these “extratextual” scenes—in other words, they appear outside the text. If you were directing *Julius Caesar* and wanted to theatricalize a brief scene just prior to the first words spoken of the text by the Flavius, what would your “extratextual” scene look like? Watch how the director chooses to theatricalize the opening of this production. What information does he seem to want to be communicating to the audience before the opening lines of Shakespeare’s script? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5, W2, W9**



Back in the classroom

AS A CLASS

83 Stage or Page

Some critics believe that Shakespeare is better on the stage than on the page. After you have seen it, do you agree or disagree with their assessment? Why or why not? How did your expectations match up with what you saw? Discuss the similarities and differences. Analyze your expectations—why do you think you had certain expectations? How will you approach the next play you see? How would you prepare a friend or relative seeing a Shakespeare play for the first time? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W1, W9**

84 Heare Ye, Heare Ye!

The word “audience” comes from the Latin “audentia,” meaning “to hear.” In Elizabethan times people went to the theater to hear the plays just as much as they went to see them. Discuss as a class your experience with hearing the words of Shakespeare. How was it different from reading them? Were there particular scenes or specific characters that you felt benefited from hearing rather than reading the language? What was it about those scenes specifically that made them ripe for acting? What impact did the production’s soundscape (songs, incidental music and sound effects) have on your experience? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL2**

85 What’s Your Opinion?

*To the teacher: Select quotes that you find relevant to class discussions you’ve had about the play from the hand-book section “What History and the Critics Say.” Cut individual quotes into strips and put them in a bowl. Pass the quotes around the class and have everyone pick out a quote. Respond individually to the ideas with your own point of view based on both your experience with the play in class and, now, with your experience seeing the production at CST. Make sure to share with the class everything you remember about the character, controversy, theme, etc. Did your point of view actually change in seeing the production? Be specific about moments in the production and use lines in the text that support your viewpoint! **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R8, SL3***



ON YOUR OWN

86 Comic Relief

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was common to rewrite Shakespeare's tragedies to achieve various effects. Now that you have seen *Julius Caesar* in performance, imagine that you are a playwright hired by an acting company to write comic scenes for this play. Where might a comic scene occur? What kind of character would be appropriate to the play? In Jonathan Munby's production, did any performances surprise you as comic elements that you hadn't expected? Imagine a comic character for *Julius Caesar* and write your own brief scene: include where it occurs in the text. Act it out, including the last lines of the scenes directly before and directly after it. Was it successful? (You might want to refer back to the scene between Peter and the Musicians in *Romeo and Juliet* 4.5.100-138, or the Gravediggers' scene in *Hamlet* 5.1.1-65 to see how Shakespeare handles comedy—even in his great tragedies.) **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R9, W3**

87 Write Back to Us!

Write a letter to Chicago Shakespeare Theater expressing your opinions about the production. (We love reading them!) What was your favorite part? What part, if any, didn't you like? Tell us your responses:

- ✧ Did seeing the play performed change your ideas about any of the characters or scenes?
- ✧ How close was Chicago Shakespeare Theater's production design to your own vision of the play? What would you have changed?
- ✧ Was there any point during the performance at which the sound design particularly affected you—or distracted you? What kind of mood did it create?
- ✧ What moment, scene, element, or character was most interesting to you in the production and why?

Based on the production you just saw, what do you think this director and her cast were most interested in expressing about *Julius Caesar*? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W4**

88 A Critical Eye

You are a drama critic for the *Chicago Tribune*. Look at some real theater reviews online or in the newspaper to get some ideas. Briefly recount the plot. Discuss the parts of the production—including the casting, acting, setting, lights, music, costumes, cuts you particularly liked or did not like, and explain how you did or did not think each worked to tell the story.. How easy/difficult was it to understand the language? How much did you "believe" what was happening? (These are good clues to a production's strengths or weaknesses.) **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R9, W3**

89 Madmen

Design a newspaper ad advertising Chicago Shakespeare Theater's *Julius Caesar*. Remember that you must characterize the play and attract a large audience in just a few words and images. What visual image from the play would you choose to capture the play's essence? Are there any particular quotes from the play you would use to grab people's interest? Choose a few key words to incorporate into the ad to evoke the mood of the production. Compare your ideas with the ads that appear in the Friday "Arts" section of the *Tribune*. What are the strengths of each? How do they work differently? **CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W2, W9**



Theater warm-ups

Unlike many of the classic works studied in the English classroom, Shakespeare's plays were written to be spoken out loud and heard by an audience. Introducing performance into the classroom can be a powerful tool for increasing fluency and comprehension, encouraging empathy, and exploring character perspective and choices. A student who has had the chance to "be" Antony and create their own interpretation of "Friends, Romans, Countrymen..." is less likely to be intimidated by the foreign nature of Shakespeare's words.

Learning and understanding Shakespeare is a skill. It is different from history or math classes where you are required to learn and apply facts. Learning Shakespeare can be compared to learning music, sports or other "learning by doing" classes. How does a music class usually begin? With a warm-up. How do you start a physical class? With a warm-up! Most of the time, those warm-ups are physical and usually not only engage the body but also engage the mind.

A brief physical and vocal warm-up can help your students move from a "classroom mode" to a "studio mode." It sets the tone for a student learning Shakespeare in a theatrical sense as well as a literary sense. And you will find that after the first couple of times, your students' nerves—and yours—will be unseated by energy and focus. A few rehearsals in the privacy of your own home can do a lot to bolster your courage! Every actor develops his/her own set of physical and vocal warm-ups. Warm-ups help the actor prepare for rehearsal or performance not only physically, but also mentally. The actor has the chance to focus on the work at hand, forgetting all the day-to-day distractions of life, and beginning to assume the flexibility required to create a character. The body, the voice and the imagination are the actor's (and the student's) tools in mastering Shakespeare.

PHYSICAL WARM-UPS

Getting Started

- ✧ creates focus on the immediate moment
- ✧ brings students to body awareness
- ✧ helps dispel tension

Begin by asking your students to take a comfortable stance with their feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing straight ahead, knees relaxed. Ask them to inhale deeply through their noses, filling their lungs deep into their abdomen, and exhale through their mouths. Repeat this a few times and ask them to notice how their lungs fill like a six-sided box, creating movement in all six directions.

One of the actors at Chicago Shakespeare Theater likes to describe the experience of acting Shakespeare as the "Olympics of Acting." Shakespeare's verse demands a very flexible vocal instrument, and an ability to express not only the flow of the text, but the emotional shifts which are suggested by the variations in rhythm and sound. In light of the sheer volume of words, some of which are rarely—if ever—used in modern vocabulary, the actor must also be prepared to help the audience with his body, as well. An actor acting Shakespeare must go through each word of his text, determine its meaning, and then express it clearly to his audience. This requires a very physically demanding style. The physical and vocal warm-up is the actor's basis for each performance.



Warm-up from the top of the body down

(approximately seven to ten minutes)

- ✧ gentle movement helps increase circulation, flexibility, and body readiness
 - ✧ increases physical and spatial awareness
- (a) Begin by doing head-rolls to the left and to the right, about four times each way, very slowly. Then do a series of shoulder rolls to the back and to the front, again very slowly, and emphasizing a full range of motion.
 - (b) Stretch each arm toward the ceiling alternately, and try to pull all the way through the rib cage, repeating this motion six to eight times.
 - (c) Next, with particular care to keep knees slightly bent, twist from the waist in each direction, trying to look behind. Again, repeat six to eight times.
 - (d) From a standing position, starting with the top of the head, roll down with relaxed neck and arms until the body is hanging from the waist. Ask the students to shake things around, making sure their bodies are relaxed. From this position, bend at the knees, putting both hands on the floor. Stretch back up to hanging. Repeat this action about four times. Then roll back up—starting from the base of the spine, stack each vertebra until the head is the last thing to come up.
 - (e) Repeat the deep breathing from the beginning of the warm-up. Ask the students to bring their feet together, bend their knees, and keeping their knees together ask the students to rotate their knees in a circle parallel to the ground six to eight times. Repeat in the other direction. Return to standing.
 - (f) Pick up the right foot, rotate it inward six to eight times, and then do the same with the left foot. Repeat with outward rotation of the foot. Take a few moments and shake out the entire body.

VOCAL WARM-UPS

*Your vocal warm-up should follow your physical warm-up directly
(This entire process should take about seven minutes.)*

- ✧ helps connect physicality to vocality
 - ✧ begins to open the imagination to performance possibilities
- (a) Ask students to gently massage and pat the muscles of their faces. This will help wake up the facial muscles.
 - (b) Ask students to stick their tongues out as far as possible—repeat this with the tongue pointing up, down, and to each side. (This exercise will seem strange, but can be made silly and fun, while accomplishing the necessary vocal warm-up. When students see you going through these exercises with commitment, that's often all they need to draw them in.) Repeat this exercise once or twice.
 - (c) Ask students to put their lips gently together and blow air through them, creating a “raspberry.”
 - (d) Next, hum, quietly, loudly, and across the entire vocal range. The vocal instrument loves to hum. Explore all the resonating spaces in the body, by moving the sound around. Humming helps to lubricate.
 - (e) Create the vowel sounds, overemphasizing each shape with the face —A, E, I, O, and U—with no break.
 - (f) Choose two or three tongue-twisters—there are some listed below. Again overemphasizing the shape of each sound with the lips, tongue, jaw, and facial muscles, begin slowly with each tongue-twister, and gradually speed up, repeating until the speed is such that the enunciation is lost.



Tongue Twisters

- ✧ red leather, yellow leather ... (focus on the vertical motion of the mouth)
- ✧ unique New York... (focus on the front to back movement of the face)
- ✧ rubber, baby, buggy, bumpers... (focus on the clear repetition of the soft plosives)
- ✧ *Peter Piper* picked a peck of pickled peppers... (focus on the clear repetition of hard plosives)
- ✧ the lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue, the tip of the tongue, the teeth, the lips (focus on crisp and frontal placement of consonants)
- ✧ I carried the married character over the barrier (focus on consonants with vowel shading)
- ✧ toy boat, toy boat, toy boat (focus on the long /o/)

Stage Pictures

- ✧ shows how varied interpretation is: there is no wrong answer
- ✧ encourages the students to interpret concepts with their whole bodies
- ✧ begins to show how the body interprets emotion

You will need a list of very strong descriptive, colorful, emotional words from the script for this activity. Ask your students to begin walking around the room. Ask them to fill up the entire space, exploring pacing, what it would feel like to be a different weight, a different height, and ask them to move the center of their body into different places. Encourage them to see if they feel any emotional differences within these changes. Giving them about three minutes to explore these changes, see if you notice any particularly interesting discoveries. Encourage these discoveries without necessarily drawing focus to individual students, as this is a self-reflective activity, but perhaps suggest to the group they might “Try what it feels like if you slow your pace, hunch your shoulders, droop your head, and move your center into your knees.”

After a few minutes of this exploration, ask your students to find a “neutral” walk. Explain that they are going to create a stage picture as an entire group. You will give them a word, and then count down from seven. After those seven beats, you will say freeze, and they must create a photograph of the word you have given them, with their entire body, collectively. Comment on the emotions you feel from their stage picture. After a couple of words, split the group in half—half will be in the space and half will be audience. Repeat the process, encouraging the audience’s reactions after each tableau. This might be a good time to discuss balance, stage direction, and the use of levels as effective variation for the audience’s visual interpretation.

Shakespeare’s characters are often very physically broad. He created elderly characters and hunchbacked characters; clowns, star-crossed lovers and cold-blooded killers. These characters call for the actors to figure out how they move. If the character is greedy, should his center be in a big fat belly? The actor must be prepared to experiment with the character’s body.

Mirroring

- ✧ helps build trust within the ensemble
- ✧ encourages the students to “listen” with all their senses
- ✧ helps the students reach a state of “relaxed readiness,” which will encourage their impulses, and discourage their internal censors



Either ask your students to partner up, or count them off in pairs. Ask them to sit, comfortably facing their partner, in fairly close proximity. Explain to them that they are mirrors of each other. One partner will begin as the leader, and the other partner will move as their reflection. Explain that they must begin by using smaller, slower movements, and work up to the maximum range of movement that their partner can follow. Encourage the partners to make eye-contact and see each other as a whole picture, rather than following each other's small motions with their eyes. Switch leaders and repeat. After the second leader has had a turn, ask the students to stand and increase their range of movement. Switch leaders and repeat. After the second leader has had a turn, tell them that they should keep going, but there is no leader. See what happens, and then discuss.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Each of these exercises is meant to open and expand our imaginations, increase our sense of “ensemble” or team-work, and encourage being “in the moment.” These are some of the most fundamental and crucial elements of an actor's training—and, of course, they are fundamental, too, to the learning process in the classroom.

Four Up

(This exercise takes about five minutes, but can also be extended.)

- ★ helps the ensemble work together
- ★ helps to slowly introduce physical activities in the classroom
- ★ helps to bring focus to the classroom

For this game, everyone should be seated; it would be fine for the students to stay seated at their desks. The goal of this game is to have four people standing at all times. There are a few rules—everyone can stand up whenever they want, but only four should be standing at a time and they can only stand up for a maximum of 5 seconds. Finally everyone needs to pay attention to each other and everybody should participate and try to stand with a group of four.

A sense of community and having a strong focus can be the keys to a successful production (and classroom too!). This exercise can help to establish those things in a fun way that is also getting the students up on their feet.

Zing! Ball

(This exercise lasts about five minutes and requires a soft ball about 8-12 inches in diameter.)

- ★ helps the ensemble grow together
- ★ helps the students let go of their internal “censor” and begin tapping into their impulses
- ★ brings the physical and the vocal actor tools together

Ask the students to stand in a circle, facing in. Explain that the ball carries with it energy. This energy is like a feedback loop that increases the energy, speed, and focus of the entire group by the amount that each actor-student puts into the ball. The idea is to keep the ball moving in the circle without letting the energy drop. There should be no space between throw and catch. There should be no thought as to whom the student will throw the ball to next. As the ball is thrown, to keep the intensity of the energy, the student must make eye contact with the person he is throwing the ball to, and at the moment of release, the person throwing should say “Zing!” Note: Encourage the students to experiment with the way they say “Zing!” It could be loud or soft, in a character voice, or in whatever way they wish, as long as it is impulsive and with energy.

Shakespeare has love scenes, sword fights, betrayals, and all sorts of relationships in his plays. They must be able to experiment, follow their impulses, and create character without the fear of failure.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



Zing! Ball (without a ball)

(This activity takes five to seven minutes.)

- ✧ asks the students to make their imagination clear to the ensemble
- ✧ focuses the students on physical detail

This exercise builds on Zing! Ball. Take the ball out of the circle and set it aside. Take an imaginary Zing! Ball out of your pocket. Grow this ball from a tiny rubber ball into a huge balloon. Using “Zing!,” toss the ball to a student across the circle, and as it floats down, ask the student to catch it with the same weight and speed as you threw it. Then ask that student to recreate the ball into a different weight and size, making it clear to the rest of the circle how they’ve changed it. In the same way as Zing! Ball, work around the circle.

The wide range of vocabulary in Shakespeare’s plays can often be intimidating as one reads the scripts. The actor’s job is to make the language clear, and this is often accomplished by very specific physical gesturing.

Wah!

(This activity can take between five and ten minutes)

- ✧ facilitates physical awareness and risk-taking
- ✧ encourages vocal projection
- ✧ helps actors increase their sense of timing and decrease response time

Ask your students to stand in a circle, facing in. They are no longer students, but fearsome warriors, and their hands, with palms pressed flat together, have become their swords. To begin the game, one warrior raises his or her sword straight up, then brings it down, pointing at another warrior in the circle. The warriors must make excellent eye contact, to avoid confusion. As the warrior brings down his or her sword, he or she utters a fearsome battle cry, by saying, “Wah!” (Be wary, warriors, of shouting, which comes from the throat and leads to laryngitis, a warrior’s worst enemy. Using the good support and deep breathing from the beginning of your warmup will help you keep your vocal chords in top fighting condition.) Once the warriors have made eye contact, the second warrior raises his or her sword, crying “Wah!,” and allows the warriors on either side of her to slash his or her stomach, as they cry “Wah!” in unison. Then the warrior with his or her sword up slashes down, making eye contact with someone else and saying “Wah!” and the game continues. Each “battle” should therefore include three cries of “Wah!” Encourage your students to increase their speed and volume. This is a silly game; remind your students that warriors don’t care about “looking cool” because they’re too busy fighting unending battles. When a warrior misses his or her cue, stop the round and start it again until everyone is comfortable being loud and making big physical choices.

Many actors will tell you that learning the lines is the easy part; making it come out of their mouths as if for the first time is the hard part, especially with Shakespeare. Shakespeare can sound like a song, but how do you make it sound like real people talking to each other?

Actors listen to each other, and try to respond to what they hear in the moment of the play. Listening is a very important part of acting; it keeps the moment real—and the characters believable.



Suggested Readings

Most of the books suggested here are available to peruse in our Teacher Resource Center, open after Teacher Workshops and by appointment.

Baldwin, Lacey. *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia*. Princeton, 1986. This wonderfully entertaining and informative book tells the story of several would-be traitors during the Tudor period.

Barton, John. *Playing Shakespeare*. London, 1986. A bible for Shakespearean actors, this classic book by John Barton (of Royal Shakespeare Company fame) offers any reader with an interest in Shakespeare's words an insider's insight into making Shakespeare's language comprehensible.

Bevington, David, ed. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. New York, 1997. A compendium of Shakespeare's complete works, with an excellent, readable introduction and clearly written footnotes.

Bloom, Allan. *Shakespeare's Politics*. New York, 1964. In essays looking at *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, "the other" Bloom presents Shakespeare as a profoundly political Renaissance dramatist.

Bloom, Harold, ed. *Major Literary Characters: Julius Caesar*. New York, 1993. An exploration of Caesar as a literary character.



Boose, Lynda E., and Richard Burt. *Shakespeare, the Movie: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, and Video*. London, 1997. A valuable resource in teaching a wide variety of film adaptations, and especially the film adaptations of the 1990s. The first chapter provides an examination of the proliferation of film adaptations in the '90s that appeal to both teachers and students, and a useful overview of the styles of film adaptations that have evolved.

Brockbank, Philip, ed. *Players of Shakespeare, Volumes 1–6*. Cambridge (1988–2007). Written by famous actors about the Shakespearean roles they have performed on the English stage, this collection of personal essays offers the reader a privileged look inside the characters and the artist's craft.

Bullough, Geoffrey, ed. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. 5*. New York, 1964. The classic reference detailing Shakespeare's sources. Out of print, this multi-volume resource is well worth searching for in a library or used book stores/sites.



Cartmell, Deborah. *Interpreting Shakespeare on Screen*. New York, 2000. Focus on film and violence, gender, sexuality, race and nationalism as they pertain to the analysis of film adaptations of plays like *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *Henry V*.



Christel, Mary T., and Scott Sullivan. *Lesson Plans for Creating Media-rich Classrooms*. Urbana, IL, 2007. Scott Williams's lesson plans for creating movie trailers are included in this collection.



Dakin, Mary Ellen. *Reading Shakespeare Film First*. Urbana, IL, 2013. A comprehensive overview of ways to use film to enhance the study of any play with students at every level.



Davis, James E., and Ronald E. Salomone. *Teaching Shakespeare Today: Practical Approaches and Productive Strategies*. Urbana, IL, 1993. This text is similar in format to *Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-first Century*. In combination, they provide the greatest wealth of teaching ideas, including the use of film.

Dean, Leonard F., ed. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Julius Caesar*. Englewood Cliffs, 1968. A collection of critical essays and commentary on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.



indicates a focus on methods for teaching Shakespeare through film.

SUGGESTED READINGS



Duggan, Timothy J. *Advanced Placement Classroom: Julius Caesar*. Waco, TX, 2012. A detailed guide for the play replete with theory, engaging and practical teaching strategies, and resources.

Foster, Cass. *Sixty-minute Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. Chandler, AZ, 2000. Swan Books developed a series of “short Shakespeare” editions with Shakespeare’s original language, abridged for younger students. It’s an excellent series for elementary and ESL teachers to know about.

Gibson, Rex. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge, 1998. As “missionary” and inspiration to the active Shakespeare movement worldwide, Rex Gibson compiles into one incomparable resource activities that encourage students to playfully and thoughtfully engage with Shakespeare’s language and its infinite possibilities.

Goddard, Harold C. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Chicago, 1951. A classic, post-war critical analysis, which is both readable and humanistic, devoting a chapter to each play.

Gruen, Erich S. *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*. Berkeley, 1974. This classic study of the late Republic examines institutions as well as personalities, social tensions as well as politics, the plebs and the army as well as the aristocracy.

Grun, Bernard. *The Timetables of History: The New Revised Fourth Edition*. New York, 1991. This book is a must-have resource for anyone who loves to place Shakespeare, his writing, and his royal characters in a historical context.

Hills and Ötchen. *Shakespeare’s Insults: Educating Your Wit*. Ann Arbor, 1991. Here are the best 5,000 examples of Shakespeare’s insults, arranged by play, in order of appearance, with helpful act and line numbers for easy reference.

Kahn, Coppélia. “Julius Caesar: A Modern Perspective,” *The New Folger Library: Julius Caesar*. New York, 1992. An essay by a leading Shakespeare scholar providing a modern perspective on the play.

Kott, Jan. *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. London, 1965. This provocative, original study of the major plays of Shakespeare is one of the few critical works to have strongly influenced theatrical productions, as Kott draws analogies between Shakespearean situations and those in modern life.



Krueger, Ellen, and Mary T. Christel. *Seeing and Believing: How to Teach Media Literacy in the English Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH, 2001. Providing the vocabulary of film analysis, this resource helps acquaint teachers with various ways to teach film adaptations as a cinematic text.

Leggatt, Alexander. *Shakespeare’s Political Drama*. New York, 1988. Examines the depiction of state and public power in the English and Roman histories.

Lewis, Naphtali. *The Ides of March*. Toronto, 1985. In this fascinating collection of texts, *Julius Caesar* and his time come alive, as ancient writers vividly portray his rise to power, the stunning assassination itself, and the aftermath that changed the Mediterranean world.

MacCaffrey, Wallace. *Elizabeth I*. London, 1993. MacCaffrey’s three volumes thoroughly chronicle the Queen’s decision making throughout her reign in a way that combines pleasurable reading with subtle analysis.

Martindale, Charles and Michelle. *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity*. London, 1990. Challenging the traditional school that Shakespeare was well-schooled in the classics, this study examines how the playwright used his relatively restricted knowledge to create an unusually convincing picture of Rome.

McDonald, Russ. “The Flaw in the Flaw,” in *Shakespeare Set Free*. Peggy O’Brien, ed. New York, 1993. McDonald’s essay offers an illuminating lens through which to read and revisit Shakespeare’s tragedies.



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SUGGESTED READINGS

Michaels, Wendy and Ken Watson. *The Dogs of War: A Workshop Approach to Julius Caesar*. New South Wales, 1991. A teaching resource from the Shakespeare Workshop Series looking at a workshop approach to *Julius Caesar*. The text is designed to be photocopied to make multiple copies for educational purposes.

Mullaney, Steven. *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England*. Chicago, 1988. Mullaney examines the culture of popular drama in Elizabethan and Jacobean England by offering an original and historically grounded perspective on the emergence of popular theater.



Naremore, James. *Film Adaptation*. New Brunswick, NJ, 2000. The opening chapters outline the strategies that filmmakers use in adapting literature into film, which include “cinema as digest” and issues of fidelity to the literary source.

O'Brien, Peggy. *Shakespeare Set Free*. New York, 1993. This excellent three-volume set does not include *Julius Caesar*, but its “active Shakespeare” approach is adaptable to any play you may be teaching.



Parsons, Keith and Mason, Pamela. *Shakespeare in Performance*. London, 1995. An extensively illustrated book detailing the performance history of Shakespeare's plays, both on the stage and in film.

Partridge, Eric. *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. London, 2000. Not for the prudish, Partridge's classic work offers an alphabetical glossary of the sexual and scatological meanings of Shakespeare's language. It will help the reader (including even the most Shakespeare-averse) understand another reason for this playwright's broad appeal on stage...

Peacock, John. *Costume 1066–1990s*. London, 1994. Among the many excellent costume books available, Peacock's offers hundreds and hundreds of annotated sketches—an essential resource (from our point of view) for every English classroom's study of Shakespeare.



Rosenthal, Daniel. *Shakespeare on Screen*. London, 2000. This illustrated book traces the development of cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare focusing on plays that have been made into films several times. It is an excellent resource to gain insight into the filmmaking and adaptation process.

Ripley, John. *Julius Caesar on stage in England and America, 1599–1973*. Cambridge, 1980. Ripley offers one of the most detailed stage histories ever attempted, focusing upon aspects both of English and American staging from 1599 to 1973. His primary sources include promptbooks and ground plans, letters, diaries and reviews.



Salomone, Ronald E., and James E. Davis. *Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-first Century*. Athens, 1997. This collection of essays by high school teachers and college professors offers a wide range of strategies to teach Shakespeare, including several essays on the use of film and film adaptation in the classroom.

Schanzer, Ernest. *Julius Caesar, in The Problem Plays of Shakespeare*. London, 1963. Themes, structural pattern, character-problems, and the play's relation to its sources, as well as to other plays in the canon, are all explored.

Shakespeare, William. *Cambridge School Shakespeare: Julius Caesar*. Ed. Rex Gibson. Cambridge. This excellent series, used extensively as a resource in Chicago Shakespeare's education efforts, currently includes *Julius Caesar*, along with more than half of Shakespeare's other plays, with more to follow. Chicago Shakespeare gratefully thanks Cambridge University Press for permission to adapt some of the classroom activities annotated throughout this Teacher Handbook.

Wills, Garry. *Rome and Rhetoric: Shakespeare's Julius Caesar*. New Haven, CT, 2011. This new book illuminates the various interpretations of Roman history in Shakespeare and is an excellent resource for any teacher choosing to focus on the play's use of rhetoric.



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Techno Shakespeare

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's website

www.chicagoshakes.com

COMPREHENSIVE LINK SITES

William Shakespeare and the Internet

shakespeare.palomar.edu/

Shakespeare in Europe Sh:in:E

Website created and maintained by Basel University in Switzerland.

www.unibas.ch/shine/home

Touchstone Database

Website database for researching Shakespeare, created and maintained by University of Birmingham in the UK.

www.touchstone.bham.ac.uk/welcome.html

Absolute Shakespeare

absoluteshakespeare.com

TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

The Folger Shakespeare Library

www.folger.edu/index.cfm

Proper Elizabethan Accents

www.renfaire.com/Language/index.html

The English Renaissance in Context: Multimedia Tutorials

Multimedia tutorials about the English Renaissance, created and maintained by University of Pennsylvania.

sceti.library.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/eric/teach/index.cfm

The History of Costume by Braun and Schneider

www.siue.edu/COSTUMES/history.html



JULIUS CAESAR

BBC's 60-second Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

www.bbc.co.uk/drama/shakespeare/60secondshakespeare/themes_juliuscaesar.shtml

BBC and RSC's Shakespeare Unlocked: *Julius Caesar*

Shakespeare Unlocked is aimed at teachers and young students of Shakespeare. It offers insights into character, dramatic devices and interpretative choices through performance.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01dtvpl/features/caesar>

Niccolai Group *Julius Caesar* Online Exhibition

This is the website companion to a touring exhibit about Julius Caesar's Ancient Rome.

juliuscaesar.niccolaignroup.com/

A Teacher Guide to the Signet Edition: *Romeo and Juliet*

www.us.penguinroup.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/caesar.pdf

Encyclopaedia Romana: Ides of March

penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/calendar/ides.html

Penguin Classics Teachers' Guides: *Julius Caesar*

www.penguinclassics.co.uk/nf/shared/WebDisplay/0,,83574_1_10,00.html

Web English Teacher: *Julius Caesar*

www.webenglishteacher.com/juliuscaesar.html

Spark Notes: *Julius Caesar*

www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/juliuscaesar/

Shakespeare Resource Center: *Julius Caesar*

www.bardweb.net/plays/julius.html

SHAKESPEARE AND ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

www.shakespeare.org.uk/

The Elizabethan Theatre

www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/englisch/shakespeare/index.html

Queen Elizabeth I

www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm

Encyclopedia Britannica's Guide to Shakespeare

search.eb.com/shakespeare/index2.html

Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend

Web-based exhibit acting as a companion to The Newberry Library's Queen Elizabeth exhibit in 2003/2004.

www.newberry.org/elizabeth/



TEXTS AND EARLY EDITIONS

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare

This was the first online web edition of the complete works, created and maintained by Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/works.html

Treasures in Full: Shakespeare in Quarto

A copy of the quartos, available to compare side-by-side, as well as background information. This website was created and is maintained by the British Library.
www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html

The Internet Shakespeare Editions

This website has transcriptions and high quality facsimiles of Shakespeare's folios and quartos, categorized by play with links to any articles written about the play that can be found on the website.
internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Foyer/plays.html

Furness Shakespeare Library

A collection of primary and secondary texts that illustrate the theater, literature, and history of Shakespeare, Shakespearean texts, theatrical production and criticism. It was created and is maintained by University of Pennsylvania.
dewey.lib.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/

What Is a Folio?

This page gives an easy to understand introduction to the Folio texts, part of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's website "Hamlet on the Ramparts."
shea.mit.edu/ramparts/newstuff3.htm

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary

Part of Tufts University's Perseus Digital Library and created by Alexander Schmidt.
www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0079

Shakespeare's Words Glossary and Language Companion

Created by David Crystal and Ben Crystal, this is a free online companion to the best-selling glossary and language companion, Shakespeare's Words.
www.shakespeareswords.com

Words Shakespeare Invented

This list compiled by Amanda Mabillard has some of the many words Shakespeare created; when you click on the word it takes you to the play in which it first appeared.
shakespeare-online.com/biography/wordsinvented.html



SHAKESPEARE IN PERFORMANCE

The Internet Broadway Database

This online database of Broadway plays is a great place to do a search for 'Shakespeare' and find out about some of the different productions of the Bard's works. (Note: This will only give you information about shows performed on Broadway.
www.ibdb.com

The Internet Movie Database: William Shakespeare

Similar to IBDB, this is an online database of movies and is also a great place to do a search for 'Shakespeare' and find all the different cinematic versions of his plays that have been produced.
www.us.imdb.com/find?q=Shakespeare

Shakespeare's Staging: Shakespeare's Performance and his Globe Theatre

This website surveys staging of Shakespeare's plays, from Shakespeare's lifetime through modern times.
shakespeare.berkeley.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=134

SHAKESPEARE IN ART

Shakespeare Illustrated

Harry Rusche, English professor at Emory University, created this helpful website that explores nineteenth-century paintings, criticism and productions of Shakespeare's plays and their influences on one another. Most plays have at least two works of arts accompanying them; you can search for works of art by both play title and artist name.
www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html

Absolute Shakespeare

This website also has examples of paintings based on Shakespeare's works and features examples of text believed to have inspired the painting.
absoluteshakespeare.com/pictures/shakespeare_pictures.htm

The Faces of Elizabeth I

www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizface.htm

Tudor England: Images

www.marileecody.com/images.html



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