Julius Caesar

Atlanta Shakespeare Company
Cast and Crew

Brutus – J.L. Reed
Cassius – Kenneth Wigley
Caesar, Strato – Marcus Hopkins-Turner*
Calpurnia, Lucilius – Olivia Dawson*
Marc Antony – Daniel Parvis
Portia, Clitus, Cobbler – Amanda Lindsey
Casca, Octavius’ Soldier – Amy Levin
Lucius, Antony’s Servant, Dardanius – Kevin Qian
Octavius, Cinna – Josh Goodridge
Artemidorus, Poet, Antony’s Soldier, Marullus – Rivka Levin*
Decius Brutus, Titinius, Carpenter – O’Neil Delapenha
Cinna the Poet, Cicero, Carro – Jake West
Trbonius, Lepidus, Volumnius – Adam King
Soothsayer, Pindarus, Octavius’ Servant – Kati Grace Brown
Metellus Cimber, Citizen, Messala – Dani Herd
Ligarius, 1st Plebian, Octavius’ 2nd Soldier – Tamia Fair
4th Plebian, Claudio – Brieanna Haberling
Casca Understudy – Carlyle DePriest
Artemidorus, Antony’s Soldier Understudy – Quenten McNair
Murellus, Poet Understudy – Johnny Bakis

*denotes a member of Actors Equity Association

Director Mary Ruth Rlaston
Assistant Director Matt Nitchie
Fight Choreographer Drew Reeves
Fight Captain Adam King
Stage Manager Cindy Kearns
Assistant Stage Manager Lilly Baxley
ASC, we believe that Shakespeare’s stories never cease to be compelling. And I think you’ll agree with me when you see Shakespeare’s words brought to life by our talented ASC actors.

It is so important for you to see Shakespeare live. Seeing it on the page just doesn’t compare to seeing passionate actors up there on stage wielding Shakespeare’s poetry as if their lives depended on it. It’s exciting; it’s fabulous; it brings the magic to life and really drives home how Shakespeare is important and why you study it three times before your high school graduation.

I hope you enjoy the show.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Watkins
Artistic Director
Shakespeare (1564-1616) wrote thirty-seven plays, which have become staples of classrooms and theatres across the world.

The son of a glove-maker, Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he received a strong education in Latin and rhetoric at the local school. He married Anne Hathaway in 1582, and they had three children: Susanna, Hamnet, and Judith.

By 1592, Shakespeare had journeyed to London, where he became an extremely successful playwright and actor in the Lord Chamberlain’s Men. He profited from being a shareholder in the Globe after its construction in 1599.

Shakespeare’s plays were popular with all types of people, including the two monarchs who ruled England during his lifetime: Elizabeth I (1533-1603) and James I (1566-1625).

Shakespeare found both artistic and commercial success through his writing. He amassed a sizable fortune, acquired valuable real estate in Stratford, and purchased a coat of arms, which gave him and his father the right be called gentlemen. Shakespeare was well-known in England at the time of his death in 1616, and his fame only increased following the publication of his plays in the First Folio in 1623.

“He was not of an age, but for all time.”
- Ben Jonson on Shakespeare

1616 is the four hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare’s death, and celebrations honoring Shakespeare’s contribution to literature will take place around the world.
The Elizabethan era refers to the period of time in which Queen Elizabeth I ruled England from 1558–1603. The Elizabethan era is often referred to as the Golden Age of England. Elizabeth's reign saw a substantial decrease in the political and religious turmoil that defined the decade before she assumed the throne. Under her rule, England asserted its power, famously triumphing over the invading Spanish armada in 1588. While Elizabethans did endure plague and some unrest, conditions of the era were reasonably favorable.

Playwriting flourished under Elizabeth's reign; Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare found great success during this time. Theatre during the Elizabethan era was a touchy subject; theatres themselves were not allowed to exist within the city limits and moralists deplored the frivolity of theatrical outings. However, Queen Elizabeth enjoyed theatrical performances when the actors came to her court. Moreover, she actively involved herself in theatre of the age by forming and serving as the patron of The Queen's Men in 1583. Elizabeth I died in 1603 and was succeeded by her Scottish nephew, James I.

Understanding the Elizabethan Era

"I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too..."

- Queen Elizabeth I to troops at Tilbury facing the Spanish Armada in 1588

The sense of hierarchy dominated the Elizabethan worldview. Elizabethans believed in the Great Chain of Being, in which God and the angels were superior to humans, who in turn were superior to animals and the natural world. On earth, the English monarch was superior to all his or her subjects, and nobles were superior to people of lesser socioeconomic stations. Everything from the clothing that people wore to where they sat in a playhouse—if they attended public theatres at all—showed their status.

**Hierarchical**

**Patriarchal**

Despite having a female queen, the world was very patriarchal, with men controlling many if not all of the actions of their female relatives.

**Crowded and Dirty**

200,000 people lived in London when Elizabeth took the throne. Without modern conveniences, the city was overflowing in certain places and ripe with the smell of people and animals.
Playing Shakespeare Through the Ages

The Globe, built in 1599 on the south side of the Thames, was an open-air theatre where many of Shakespeare's plays were performed. The Globe likely was able to hold up to 3,000 tightly-packed audience members. Poorer spectators paid a penny to stand during the performance while richer theatre-goers paid two pennies for a seat and another penny for a cushion. Audience members, especially those standing in front of the stage, were loud and opinionated, often talking to each other or even voicing their thoughts on the play to the actors onstage. Performances took place at 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. to take advantage of the day light, but the time of day meant that many people skipped work to attend the plays, which contributed to conservative politicians’ dislike of theatre. While the original Globe does not exist today, a reconstruction, seen in the picture to the left, was built in 1997 in Southwark, London.

The Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse, built in 1990 on Peachtree Street in Atlanta, Georgia, features a stage with similar features to the Globe’s stage. ASC strives to create productions that are also very similar to the ones that Shakespeare’s audience would have seen. All ASC productions incorporate Original Practices, which involve the active exploration of the Elizabethan stagecraft and acting techniques that Shakespeare’s own audiences would have enjoyed nearly four hundred years ago. Performances at the Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse feature period costumes, sword fights, sound effects created live by the actors rather than pre-recorded sounds, and live music played on the stage. ASC’s actors are trained to speak Shakespeare’s words directly to the audience instead of using the more modern acting convention of ignoring the audience’s presence as if there was an imaginary “fourth wall” separating the actors and audience. Audience members at the Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse should gain a better understanding of Elizabethan style, language, and drama by seeing plays performed as Shakespeare’s own company might have performed them.

The ASC touring set, which was used in the production of Caesar: 60, is a playhouse-inspired unit with three curtained entrances from which actors can enter and exit. Like a production at the Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse, all touring productions employ Original Practices. However, the connection between ASC’s productions and the performances Shakespeare’s contemporaries would have seen is not limited to period-inspired costumes and direct address to the audience. The act of taking a performance like Caesar: 60 on tour echoes the Elizabethan practice of actors touring the countryside when outbreaks of the bubonic plague forced theatres, which fostered the spread of disease by enclosing many people in a small area, to close. Elizabethan theatre companies often brought a condensed set, props, and costumes to perform at country estates for noble families or at inns for the common people when the London theatres were closed. In bringing Caesar: 60 on tour, ASC strives to carry on this Elizabethan tradition of bringing live theatre to people outside the city.
"Words, words, words"
For many people, part of what makes reading and seeing Shakespeare so daunting is how different Shakespeare’s language seems from our modern-day English. But, never fear; there are ways to make understanding Shakespeare's words easier.

First, remember that "thee" and "thou" are variations on the word "you," although in Elizabethan times "you" was the most formal of the three expressions.

When Mark Antony speaks of the friendship and admiration he had for the dead Caesar, he says “That I did love thee, Caesar, O, 'tis true” (3.1.213). Replace “thee” with “you” and you will realize that he is saying “That I did love you, Caesar, O, 'tis true.”

Second, it is very helpful to get an edition of the play like the Folger Shakespeare Library’s Julius Caesar in which words that might not make sense to modern readers are defined. For example, the Folger edition of the play will explain that the "ides of March" (1.2.21) is March fifteenth.

Stopping to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words as you read the play will help you better understand the plot.

Shakespeare's Sources
Elizabethans often used history as a source to create new stories and as a way to provide instruction and illuminate human behavior. They were not as concerned with archaeological fact or the “real story” when researching history. Shakespeare used many different sources for his plays including older plays, current stories, history books or chronicles written by an earlier author, and literature of the age.

His source for Julius Caesar was Plutarch’s The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans. Plutarch saw history as biography and loved the mixing of historical documentation with dramatic and revealing anecdotes that told his readers about the passionate glory of the elder age. The Elizabethans revered the ancients to such a degree that much of their literature was very dependent on the earlier retellings of ancient history.

Shakespeare used Sir Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s Lives to great effect, often lifting whole segments of North’s vigorous prose and plopping it into his verse play.

Original Performance
Shakespeare likely wrote Julius Caesar in 1598, and it was published in the 1623 First Folio. Julius Caesar was likely the first play to be performed at the newly opened Globe Theatre in 1599. One excited audience member, a Swiss doctor named Thomas Platter, wrote about the experience of seeing a performance of Julius Caesar at the Globe:

“‘On the 21st of September, after dinner, at about two o’clock, I went with my party across the water; in the straw-thatched house we saw the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar, very pleasingly performed...’” (Daniell 12).
CHARACTERs IN JULIUS CAESAR

Brutus: Also known as Marcus Brutus, Brutus is a member of the Senate who, despite being close to Caesar, ultimately joins the conspirators in assassinating him. Brutus and Cassius lead troops into two battles against Mark Antony and Octavius, and Brutus kills himself by running onto his sword at the end of the play after his troops lose the final battle.

Cassius: Also known as Caius Cassius, Cassius is a principal conspirator in the assassination of Caesar. Cassius and Brutus fight against Mark Antony and Octavius. Cassius, mistakenly believing that his troops have lost the first battle, dies after requesting that his slave Pindarus kill him.

Casca: Casca is a conspirator who joins in the assassination of Caesar.

Calphurnia: Calphurnia is Caesar’s wife, who believes bad omens signal danger to Caesar on the Ides of March and unsuccessfully urges her husband to remain at home.

Cinna: Cinna participates in Caesar’s assassination.

Cinna the poet: Cinna the poet is a writer who is killed by an angry crowd who mistake him for Cinna, the conspirator.

Decius Brutus: A conspirator against Caesar, Decius Brutus helps draw Caesar to the Senate on the Ides of March.

Julius Caesar: A successful military leader and powerful member of the Roman Senate, Caesar is assassinated by a group of conspiring politicians who fear his growing power.

Lucius: Lucius is the servant of Brutus and Portia.

Mark Antony: Caesar’s friend and supporter, Mark Antony uses his skills in oratory to convince the Roman people to turn against Brutus, Cassius, and the rest of the conspirators. Mark Antony rules Rome with Lepidus and Octavius, the other leaders known as triumvirs, in Acts Four and Five. He joins forces with Octavius and ultimately wins the fight against Brutus and Cassius.

Messala: a soldier who frequently brings Brutus and Cassius information, including news of Portia’s death and the advance of the triumvirs.

Metellus Cimber: A conspirator, Metellus Cimber implores Caesar for mercy for his banished brother while the other conspirators gather to assassinate Caesar.

Octavius Caesar: He is one of the triumvirs who rules after Caesar’s death and is allied with Mark Antony. He helps defeat Brutus and Cassius at the battle of Philippi.

Pindarus: Cassius’ slave, Pindarus follows his master’s orders to stab him when Cassius mistakenly believes his forces have lost the first of a series of battles to Mark Antony and Octavius.

Portia: The wife of Brutus, Portia dies offstage after hearing how her husband’s enemies, Mark Antony and Octavius, have gathered a large number of forces to fight Brutus and Cassius’ troops.

Soothsayer: A woman who foretells the future, the soothsayer warns Caesar that the Ides of March may prove dangerous for him, advice which Caesar ignores.

Titinius: A military officer loyal to Brutus and Cassius, Titinius finds Cassius dead and then kills himself using Cassius’ sword.

Volumnius: He is a soldier in Brutus’ army, who is very loyal to Brutus.
In ancient Rome, Julius Caesar has just defeated the forces of general Pompey. The people celebrate Caesar’s victory. As Caesar marches in the street, a soothsayer admonishes him to take caution on the fifteenth day of March, known as the Ides of March. Cassius attempts to convince Brutus to lead a conspiracy against Caesar, expressing his concern that the power-hungry Caesar might become king. Casca confirms that Caesar could soon rise in power when he brings news that Mark Antony offered a Caesar a crown three times and that Caesar’s attempts to deny it only endeared him to the people. Casca later tells Cassius of rumors that the senators intend to make Caesar king the following day. Eager to stop Caesar’s elevation in power, Cassius instructs Cinna to deliver unsigned letters to Brutus which will encourage him to join the conspiracy.

Brutus, although a friend of Caesar, finally agrees to participate in his assassination after reading the letters because he believes that Caesar’s ambition for power is a threat to Rome. The conspirators, including Cassius, Casca, Decius Brutus, Cinna, and Metellus Cimber, gather at Brutus’ house and decide to kill Caesar the following morning on the Ides of March. Cassius suggests that they kill Caesar’s friend and ally Mark Antony but Brutus worries that the attack will appear too violent to the people and declares that only Caesar shall die. After the conspirators leave, Brutus’ wife Portia implores him to tell her what has been troubling him, and he reveals the assassination plan to her offstage.

On the morning of March fifteenth, Caesar’s wife Calphurnia begs him to stay home because she has had premonitions that he is in danger. Caesar initially concedes to his wife’s request but changes his mind when Decius Brutus arrives and informs him that the senators wish to crown Caesar but might decide not to do so if Caesar does not appear at the Senate. Caesar is joined by the other conspirators as well as Mark Antony, who is unaware of the plot against his friend’s life, and they set forth for the senate. Portia, aware of Brutus’ plan, sends her servant Lucius to the Senate to bring her word of any news.

At the Senate, Metallus Cimber goes to Caesar to appeal for the reversal of his banished brother, and all the conspirators gather around Caesar. The conspirators stab Caesar, who expresses his shock at Brutus’ betrayal of him before he dies from his wounds, and the conspirators smear their swords with Caesar’s blood. While the conspirators proclaim that the assassination means that Rome is safe from tyranny, the people are very uneasy as word spreads of Caesar’s death. After initially fleeing in fear for his life, the distraught Mark Antony returns to the scene of Caesar’s murder and, after being assured that the conspirators will not kill him, gains permission from Brutus to speak to the people.

Brutus addresses the people first, explaining that while he cared for Caesar his death was necessary because his ambition was a danger to the Roman Republic. Mark Antony uses his talent in public speaking to convince the people to question the honor of the conspirators and to grieve for Caesar. Mark Antony garners additional support for Caesar by reading his will to the public, in which the people learn that Caesar left them money and opened his personal parks for public use. The crowd is moved to anger against the conspirators, and when Mark Antony is finished speaking a mob kills Cinna the Poet because he shares the name of the conspirator Cinna.
Rome is now led by Mark Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus, the three triumvirs. Mark Antony and Octavius make plans to raise an army to fight Brutus, Cassius, and their forces.

Having gathered their army, Brutus and Cassius argue bitterly, accusing each other of taking bribes, but eventually reconcile. Brutus informs Cassius that Portia has died. While others sleep, Brutus sees the ghost of Caesar, who says that he will see Brutus again at Philippi, where Mark Antony and Octavius have gathered their troops. When the apparition of Caesar disappears, Brutus sends word instructing the troops to begin their journey to Philippi.

Before the armies meet at Philippi, Brutus and Cassius trade insults with Octavius and Mark Antony. Cassius sees an omen that he believes foretells their defeat, and he and Brutus say goodbye to each other in case they meet their deaths in the upcoming violence. Part way through the battle, Cassius sees that his tents are on fire and that Titinius, an officer, is seemingly overwhelmed by enemy troops. Believing that his troops have lost the battle, Cassius asks his slave Pindarus to kill him, and he dies. Just a short while later, Brutus and Cassius’ forces win the battle and Titinius, distraught over seeing the fallen Cassius, places the garland of victory on Cassius’ body before killing himself with Cassius’ sword.

In a second battle, the forces of Cassius and Brutus are defeated. Brutus, wanting to die honorably and not be killed by Mark Antony or led through the streets of Rome as Mark Antony celebrates his victory, asks his soldiers to kill him. Brutus eventually dies by running on his sword. When Mark Antony and Octavius discover Brutus’ body, Mark Antony praises him as the sole man with honor among the men who assassinated Caesar and Octavius pledges that he will receive proper funeral rites.
"Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world like a colossus, and we petty men walk under his huge legs and peep about to find ourselves dishonorable graves.

Cassius, Act I, Scene ii

Consider in your classroom: What traits of the character should the director keep in mind when casting an actor to play Julius Caesar? What does the text about this man suggest?
Both Brutus and Mark Antony employ rhetoric, the art of using carefully-chosen language, often with the goal of persuading or moving an audience, in their speeches about Caesar’s death. As a schoolboy in Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare learned about rhetoric by translating and analyzing famous Latin speeches, as well as by studying rhetorical devices in English. It is no surprise that the speeches Shakespeare wrote for Brutus and Marc Antony show great rhetorical skill.

During Brutus’ speech, listen for rhetorical questions, which are questions that are not meant to be answered out loud, like “Who is here so vile that will not love his country?” (3.2.34-35). Brutus uses pointed rhetorical questions to lead his listeners to specific conclusions. In this example, Brutus is encouraging the Roman spectators to examine their patriotic feelings, which Brutus will then exploit to try to convince the people that the dictatorial Caesar needed to be killed to protect the rights of all Romans.

Brutus accused Caesar of being “ambitious” (3.2.27). Note how Mark Antony keeps repeating the variations of the word “ambitious,” but he often uses in it in a way that makes the crowd question whether Caesar actually was as ambitious as Brutus claimed he was: “I thrice presented him a kingly crown,/Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?” (3.2.105-106). Also listen for Mark Antony’s expert use of pathos, or an appeal to emotions, in his speech: “If you have tears, prepare to shed them now” (3.2.181).

After you see Caesar: 60, take a look at Brutus and Mark Antony’s speeches in the play and see how many rhetorical devices you can find for yourself.

“Is the assassination a treasonous act by Caesar’s opponents, or is it a sacrifice justified by necessity, the only means available to prevent the death of a would-be tyrant?...Two leading citizens present persuasive, opposing statements of their positions on the most important issue of their time. The stakes could not be higher: the lives and fortunes of both speakers, and the fate of their country, depend upon their rhetorical skill.”

- Stephen A. Newman
Discussing *JULIUS CAESAR*

Before the play, think about...

Where are there examples of the text itself telling the reader what the physical action on stage should be? Examples: “Speak, hands for me!” (3.1.84) and “Away, slight man” (4.3.40).

During the play, listen for...

In Act II, Brutus says “I have not slept. Between the acting of a dreadful thing and the first motion, all the interim is like a phantasma or a hideous dream” (2.1.65-68). What is bothering Brutus? What does he think his options are, concerning the ruling of Rome, and Caesar?

After the play, talk about...

Why is the play named *Julius Caesar*? Who is the hero of this play? Brutus? Caesar? Mark Anthony? Cassius? What did the playwright think? What do you think?

Think of current headlines; does what happens to Cinna, the poet, seem familiar to our eyes? What kind of mob violence are we used to in modern times?

Does directly addressing the audience affect what you think and feel about the characters? Does it affect your understanding of what is going on onstage? Does it interfere? Why do you think Shakespeare wrote his plays this way? What are the benefits to the actor and/or audience? What are the risks?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


