



**GABLESTAGE
AT THE BILTMORE**

in association with

What if Works Inc.

presents

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

"JULIUS CAESAR"



Adapted & Directed by Phillip M Church.

Research by Dante DiGiacomo

Miami Dade County School District Tour

2016

JULIUS CAESAR

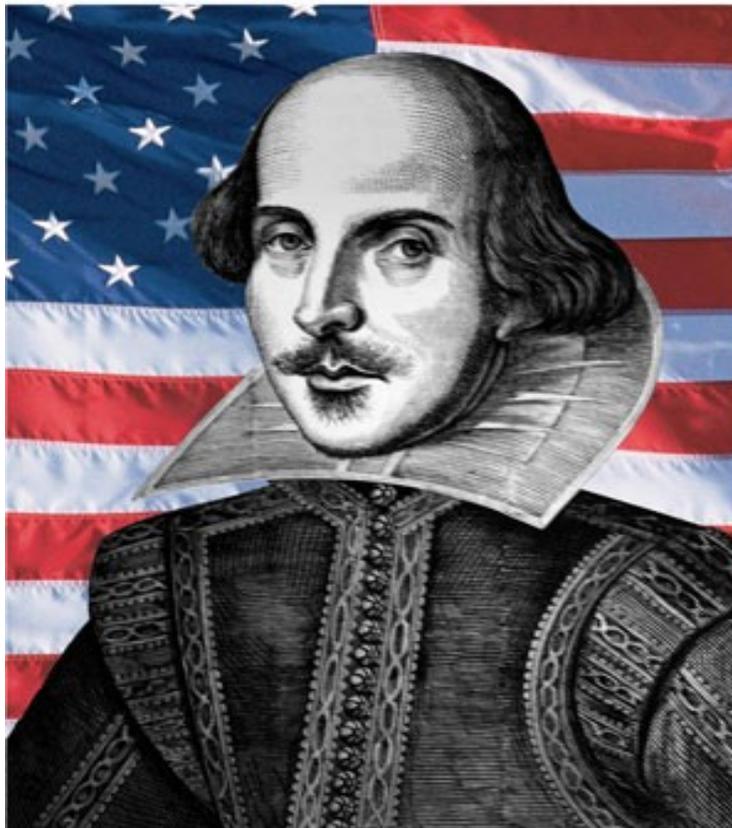
Cast

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Zack Myers | Brutus |
| Amanda Ortega | Cassia |
| Pia Vicioso-Vilar | Calpurnia / Crowd / Chorus |
| Lucas Hood | Anthony / Crowd / Crowd |
| Gabriel Bonilla | Casca / Octavius / Chorus |
| Yerelis Chavez | Portia / Soothsayer / Volumnia / Chorus |
| Michael Engelmann | Decius / Riot Guard / Pindarus/ Chorus |
| Raphael Martinez | Julius Caesar |
| Reggie Baril | Rapper & composer |

Production

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Phillip M Church | Director |
| Marina Pareja | Costume Design |
| Paul Steinsland | Stage Manager |
| Anton Church | Video & Sound Design |
| Research | Dante DiGiacomo |

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
PRESENTS



SHAKESPEARE
IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

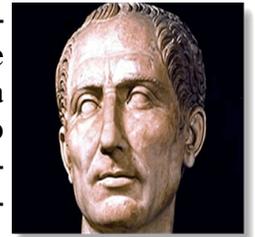
SHAKESPEARE AND HIS THEATRE

More has been written about Shakespeare than any other playwright in history and his works remain consistently on the best seller lists in many countries yet Shakespeare remains something of an enigma. No autobiography or letters exist nor any biography that has not leaned heavily on conjecture. Shakespeare was actually not a playwright. The term “playwright” was not coined until the late 18th century, in fact, his contemporary, Ben Jonson used it as a pejorative when he called Shakespeare “a playwright” as if he were a lowly craftsman of plays. He was, like his contemporaries, a poet leaving us with a large amount of poetry together with his prolific thirty-seven plays. Born in Stratford-Upon-Avon April 23, 1564 he received his secondary education at Edward VI Grammar School. His father was both a tradesman in gloves and for some years Major of Stratford. At 18 William married the 26 year-old Anne Hathaway. Together they had three children. He is believed to have left Stratford in 1585 in pursuit of a career in theatre. At this time there were twelve playhouses, nine of these being “private” theatres operating outside the city limits on the South Bank of the River Thames in what might have been called the “red-light district” of its time. Here more unseemly entertainment took place; bear-baiting, cock fighting and wrestling surrounded by taverns and houses of “ill-repute”. While some members of the nobility and even Queen Elizabeth herself frequented the playhouses from time to time, the majority of audience members were the uneducated “mechanicals”, tradespeople who took delight in receiving their education from dramatic stories whose plots were embedded with moral lessons. The mix of educated and uneducated was a constant challenge for all playwrights at the time. Shakespeare eventually became an actor and a share holder in the Globe Theatre making enough money to return to Stratford and purchase a lavish house in the center of the town. He died on April 26 1616, ironically the same date as that of Spanish playwright Miguel Cervantes.



JULIUS CAESAR: fact or fiction?

Would the real Julius Caesar please stand up! Who is the real Julius Caesar? Much heated debate amongst critics continues to this day over whether Julius Caesar was truly the dictator depicted in Shakespeare’s play or some other ruler who brought stability and prosperity to a Nation State that had been rocked by internal turmoil and strife. There is little doubt that the country was on the brink of civil war when he assumed the position. As a playwright Shakespeare took many liberties with the histories, often bending facts to suit his theatrical imagination, and by extension the approval of his audiences. Playgoers were really not eager for accurate history lessons. After all, when is history ever accurate? Gaius Julius Caesar was born July 12 or 13th 100 BCE in Rome, Italy, allegedly, a descendent of Trojan Prince Aeneas. By age 31, Caesar had fought in several wars and become involved in Roman politics. After several alliances with neighboring States, he became dictator of the Roman Empire. He was seen to become a leader who amassed more and more personal power. This led to a senatorial coup, and Caesar's eventual assassination, on the Ides of March 15th 44 BCE. War and death is made ever available to us today through social media. We are deluged with some of the most harrowing scenes of war. It is a tool of sharing and intimidation, a mechanism that works warily behind the scenes. Every ambitious dictator who wishes to dominate the world in a James Bond film is hidden deep inside a protective stronghold much like Caesar in this production who only communicates with his loyal supporters and even his wife via closed circuit television cameras. Reminiscent of George Orwell’s “1984” the government is constantly looking over the shoulder of every citizen, checking and waiting for the slightest lapse of loyalty, molding the “right” truth that will be disseminated via the news media. Yet—is this the real Julius Caesar? Is this indeed the same Caesar that brings about social change and many of those conveniences that we live with today? Perhaps with your own keen sense of enquiry you can get closer to who the real Julius Caesar might have been?



App for Globe Theatre,
London



Roman Colosseum

THE SENATE: ROME & WASHINGTON DC

All roads lead to Rome as they say, and the US Senate and US democracy certainly lead back to the city that first established the laws by which we continue to live today. Here are some interesting facts to feast on: there existed 300 Senators in the original senate.



Colosseum 3D Tour

We have a mere one hundred, with two representing each state. Patrician Senators in Rome served for a lifetime, today in the US they are reduced to six year terms. Women could not hold office in Rome. Things have change a little. Forty-four women have served since the US Senate was established in 1789. Currently twenty women serve in the one-hundred member body comprising sixteen Democrats and 4 Republicans. During the Roman Republic there existed two parties, just as we have today—the People’s Party and the Senatorial Party. Naturally the People’s Party wanted to distribute the wealth and lands to the poor. The Senatorial Party wished the old tradi-



US Senate in session

tions to remain. Back then Senators found ways to delay the passage of bills just as we see today! These were called “filibusters” and are effectively used by both parties to good advantage.

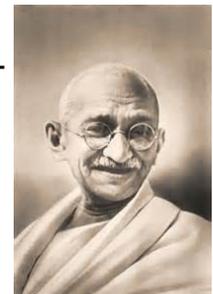


Roman Senate in Session

“Quorums” exist today just as they did in the Roman Senate—a quorum comprises a minimum number of members, usually 51 percent of the total. The Roman Senate had the power to pass laws, appoint ambassadors, declare war and control the state finances. The US Senate has the power to set and collect taxes, duties and Excises, and to provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States. How much has really changed over time?

THE WISDOM OF RIOTS?

This touring production of *Julius Caesar* identifies Brutus as a man who, before being persuaded by Cassia to lead the insurrection, is an advocate for non-violent intervention following the philosophical path of Mahatma Gandhi. Before the arrival of the conspirators he is seen meditating in his garden, reading a copy of *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse. It was plain in Act 1 Sc.2 while watching Mark Antony compete in the Olympic Games which Caesar established during his rein, that Brutus was not a man disposed to leading an insurrection. “*I am not gamesome...*” he says to Cassia “*...and I do lack some part of that quick spirit that is in Anthony*” This is so evidently a man without worldly ambition at a time when ambition was looked upon as a necessary corollary to the complete Roman character.



This brings us to the question of the wisdom of riots. How effective are riots? Does civil unrest effect change and how long-lasting are those changes? What do we mean by “civil unrest”? Looting, pillaging, raping, taking advantage of the moment to advance our own wellbeing? In our own time we have seen some monstrous riots; the Zoot Suit Riots, July 3, 1943 in Los Angeles, - the Cicero race riot of July 12, 1951 in Cicero, Illinois 1966 – the Division Street Riots, June 12–14, 1966 - Chicago, Illinois, – the Brownsville riot, May 5-6,, 1971 in New York City, the Overtown Riot December 1982—the BART Oakland Police shooting of Oscar Grant, January 7,with 120 arrests 1992 – the LA Rodney King riot, April–May, 2000 – Elián González affair, Miami, 2011 – Occupy Wall Street (Brooklyn Bridge Protests). 700 people arrested. The Baltimore riots after days of peaceful protests, rioting and looting began on Monday, April 27, 2015 following the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody. 201 people were arrested and 98 police officers injured, 7 seriously, and 2 people shot.

Has there ever been a civil war that was not sparked by civil unrest, and yet, at what a cost? The lines become blurred—families divided, brother against brother—enmity that often lasts centuries through a family’s lineage. And yet, what does one do in the face of oppression and injustice? Sit idly by watching the wheels go round and around? While some of our recent family members may have been caught up in such regimes what responsible action would you take to bring about change? Is rioting the only answer, or, like Brutus, can we attempt to find a peaceful solution to our divisions?

Dictators Through History

Before one considers a Dictator and dictatorships, maybe we need to look at the definition of the term and the variants that exist that can sometimes bring confusion to the question.

An OLIGARCH and oligarchy for instance is created by a small group of people, usually bestowing the all-powerful Oligarch the position through wealth, royalty, or family ties.

A TYRANT and tyranny is an absolute ruler unrestrained by law or constitution, but not necessarily evil who came to power by securing the support of different factions of a deme. The word *tyrannos*, possibly pre-Greek, Pelasgian or eastern in origin originally carried no ethical censure; it simply referred to anyone, good or bad, who obtained executive power in a city-state by unconventional means.

A DICTATOR rules with absolute authority, often characterized by some of the following traits: suspension of elections and of civil liberties; proclamation of a state of emergency; rule by decree; repression of political opponents without abiding by rule of law procedures; these include single-party state, and cult of personality. However, in Rome it started *as a legitimate legal position* equivalent to declaring a state of emergency. It was usually declared following a sovereign's death, during the troubled period before a successor could be chosen, but also in case of invasions. And so *Julius Caesar* was brought to power with the fall of Pompey, in which his Senate bestowed upon him the title of King and ultimate ruler. Unfortunately history is littered with the names of past dictators from as this list attests: Adolph Hitler/Germany, Joseph Stalin/USSR, Mao Zedong/China, Vlad III the Impaler/Wallachia, Kim Jong-Il/North Korea, King Herod/Israel, Pol-Pot /Cambodia and currently Baschar al Assad/Syria. There was no doubt that Caesar established a police state. He also established the postal system and underground water heating systems. Whether he was the despotic dictator that Shakespeare made him out to be is still open to conjecture. However, by altering the historic truth about Caesar Shakespeare was able to serve his audience with a moral purpose and that was the ultimate objective of the Elizabethan playwright. How about doing some research of your own to see if you can track down who the real Julius Caesar might have been?

Julius Caesar on Stage & Screen

In 1953, Joseph L. Mankiewicz adapted and directed the iconic film version of *Julius Caesar* for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Produced by John Houseman it starred Marlon Brando as Mark Antony, James Mason as Brutus, John Gielgud as Cassius, Louis Calhern as Julius Caesar and Greer Garson as Calpurnia. Other versions appeared, notably the 1970 production with Charlton Heston, Jason Robards, Christopher Lee, Richard Chamberlain and Diana Rigg as Portia. In 2002, a television adaptation arrived starring Richard Harris and Christopher Walken.

Yet theatre has produced a prolific number of productions each with its own stamp of originality. However, perhaps the most interesting account is that of the 1864 production in which Edwin and John Wilkes Booth (later the assassin of U.S. president Abraham Lincoln) made the only appearance onstage together in a benefit performance of *Julius Caesar* on 25 November 1864, at the Winter Garden Theater in New York City. Junius, Jr. played Cassius, Edwin played Brutus and John Wilkes played Mark Antony. This landmark production raised funds to erect a statue of Shakespeare in Central Park, which remains to this day. It is worth noting that John Wilkes had wanted to play Brutus but lost the role to his brother, who was a better actor. The play was declared the most astounding of performances with Edwin playing the star lead of Brutus. This enraged John to such ends that he swore to make his own name famous. He joined a secret organization and plotted to kill the president. And so he did, and after shooting Abraham Lincoln he jumped onto the stage and shouted the line "Sic semper tyrannis!" Latin phrase which translates to "thus always to tyrants" but is most commonly interpreted as "death to tyrants". The significance of the line is that "Sic semper tyrannis!" was the line Edwin Booth delivered as Brutus in his 1864 production of *Julius Caesar*.

CASSIUS OR CASSIA? WOMEN & WAR

At a time when “color-blind” and alternative casting has become an exciting new practice in theatre, it is timely that a female actor should be cast to play Cassius and with the decision to shift the character from Brutus’ brother-in-law to his sister-in-law comes some very interesting perspectives not to mention employment opportunities for female actors in the profession! As reflected below in “Family Matters” the traditional dynamic between the two characters is completely turned on its head. Yet, we live at a time when women in the military stand on the historic brink of being able to serve on the frontline in combat. Women in war is not an unusual phenomenon. Women have been serving in the military for centuries. In Frank Moore’s book “Women of the War” printed in 1867, hundreds of women from all levels of society are cited for their courageous efforts in the American Civil War through active and often dangerous duty. Many disguised themselves as men in order to serve more directly in battle. Women actually fought as Gladiators for over 200 years until Emperor Septimus Severus finally banned the practice. And in Japan, during the 16th Century, (the time when Shakespeare lived) many women turned Samurai, practicing the philosophy of Bushido, or death before dishonor — a decision made by Brutus and Cassia rather than to be taken in shame as a captive to Mark Antony. In our own time, we are seeing a far greater tolerance toward gender equality, a time in which disguises can be abandoned for the sake of clearer transparency.

FAMILY MATTERS

Shakespeare was unlike any other playwright. Each of his works attended to the importance of family matters. Observe how he places the two husband and wife pairings, Brutus & Portia and Caesar & Calpurnia, back-to-back, as if stressing the importance of family matters amidst the tumult of politics. In Act 5 Sc. 1 after a bitter altercation with her brother-in-law, Cassia reminds us that it is her birthday, the eve of the defining battle of Phillipi. In the final scene Act 5 Sc. 5, as Brutus is about to commit his own life on the point of his own knife he calls on his schoolmate, Volumnius to hold the dagger. The list of intimate moments found in *Julius Caesar* goes on and on. Shakespeare wove into his dramas, histories and comedies the one aspect of life with which audiences in all generations can identify; family relations. He had the ability to create real people to whom family matters. Personal relationships: if we wish to discover the personal relationships between the characters we need also to create personal relationships between ourselves and the characters. Shakespeare’s plays are littered with sons, fathers, daughters, uncles, cousins, sisters, brothers, brothers-in-laws and, yes, lovers. Clearly, Shakespeare evoked a deep respect for life and those who live it, yet, it is interesting to note that he left a wife and three children in Stratford in order to set out in search of fame and fortune in London’s theatre world. Critics continue to fathom out this inconsistency, yet, without question he must have cared deeply for human life. This is one of many anomalies that Shakespeare scholars continue to grapple with to this day.



ROMAN CALENDAR & THE IDES OF MARCH

During the Roman Republic, years were named after the consuls, who were elected annually. Thus, the name of the year identified a consular term of office, not a calendar year. For example, 205 BC was "The year of the consulship of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus and Publius Licinius Crassus", who took office on 15 March of that year, (the Ides of March!) and their consular year ran until 14 March 204 BC. The “Ides of March” in Germanic mythology, an idis was a divine female being. *Idis* is cognate to Old High German *itis* and Old English *ides*, meaning 'well-respected and dignified woman.' but also female beings associated with fate. One of the two Old High German Incantations call upon female beings—*Ides*—to bind and hamper an army. The incantation reads:

*Once the Idisi sat, sat here and there
some bound fetters, some hampered the army,
some untied fetters:
Escape from the fetters, flee from the enemies*



DISCUSSION & WRITING TOPICS

- 1: Which character in *Julius Caesar* would have entertained the more illiterate members of the audience? How does Shakespeare incorporate humor into the tragedy of the play?
- 2: Which scenes and what specific content would have satisfied the literate, educated members of the audience?
- 3: *"I believe they are portentous things / Unto the climate that they point upon"*. So says Casca in Act 1 Sc. 3. Climate change is of great concern to us today. Do you see these things as "signs" or portents"? How disturbed are you over what is happening to our climate today?
- 4: In this production Caesar is represented as an omnipresent power communicating with his Senators and subjects and even his own wife via closed circuit television. What other plays, novels or films portray this kind of character? Can you recognize a similar leader from real life, living or dead, who depicts this kind of leader?
- 5: Are you able to find scenes in the text where Shakespeare creates moments that explore the intimacy of family and friendship? What relationships exist in *Julius Caesar* that you can identify as your own? Do you have a brother, a brother-in-law, (sister-in-law for this production) a surrogate father,
- 6: Write a letter from a character of your choice to another in the play. Write it as the character might would write. Find an urgent need for the character to write to the other.

THE "FIRST FOLIO"

Published in 1623 scholars commonly refer to this printing as the "First Folio". It contains 36 plays comprising Tragedies, Comedies and Histories and was dedicated to William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke and his brother Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery. Publishers Heminges and Condell emphasized that their First Folio replaced earlier publications, which they characterized as *"stol'n and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by frauds and stealths of injurious impostors"*, asserting that *Shakespeare's true words "are now offer'd to your view cured, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers as he conceived them."* Now you can see it for yourself!

The First Folio will be on display at the Philip & Patricia Frost Art Museum at Florida International University February 2016. Why not make it a field trip? For more information contact us at:

305-348- 7602 or folio.fiu.edu

SPECIAL THANKS

GableStage Staff & Board of Directors
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What if Works Inc.



Mission: to provide the South Florida community with classical, contemporary and new theatrical productions of artistic excellence. We challenge our multicultural audience with innovative productions that entertain as well as confront today's issues and ideas. By emphasizing nontraditional casting and employing the best of our local creative force, GableStage endeavors to meet the needs of our diverse community. GableStage is committed to the enrichment of the local actor, director, designer and technician by providing the opportunity to achieve artistic acclaim in this region. GableStage believes the future of theatre can be assured only by the development of young audiences. Therefore, our in-house mainstage and in-school touring Educational Programs are major components of our theatre.

THE SOLUTION IS NOT WITH GUNS AND VIOLENCE

When all is said and done and the dust finally settles Shakespeare reminds us, as he does in so many of his plays, that violence is not the answer. Violence begets violence in relentlessly repetitive cycles. Even though Brutus, through the very best of intentions, attempts to rationalize the killing of Caesar when he says, "*Let's be sacrificers not butchers*" one cannot escape the fact that killing is killing regardless of how it is executed. As a consequence, countless lives are scattered upon the fields of war or in backstreet alleyways. To what end? The next cycle of power enters and another counter insurrection is ignited. The cycle of violence must be broken and the only effective way to do this is by removing the option of hatred from a young person's heart and mind at the earliest opportunity. If we fail them on this then all of Shakespeare's plays have been for nothing.



Mission: to offer post-graduates in theatre, film and music a creative bridge by which to transition from an academic environment to the professional world while championing the arts to bring about social change. Established in 2010 WIW each of its productions have presented opportunities for graduates to become socially engaged artists. WIW has also toured projects to the UK, "*The Right to Remain...Tupac Shakur*" by Meshawn Lebron, "*Body & Sold*" by Deborah Fortson a play about Human Trafficking and "*Holocaust: a Living Journey-Book*" WIW has appeared at the International Youth Festival in Kingston, London, the Washington DC Fringe Festival and the Kennedy Center. WIW is an advocate of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS raising funds with each of its productions. Currently a series of solo bio-dramas titled "*Flying Solo Through Libraries*" is being prepared in conjunction with the Miami Dade Public Library System. A triple bill exploring the lives of Frieda Kahlo, *Celia Cruz* and *Katiushka Mendoza* each written by the performer. Its second program will present "*The Dressmaker*" a full-length solo bio-drama based on Elizabeth Keckley, dressmaker and confidante to the President's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln.