

# PROSCENIUM

## **Julius Caesar**

By William Shakespeare

Julius Caesar

Wednesday 13 to Saturday 16 March 2024  
Boiler House, Harrow Arts Centre, Harrow

# Julius Caesar

## Cast

Julius Caesar .....Vincent Eavis

### Conspirators

Marcus Brutus .....Jimmy Roberts

Caius Cassius .....Izzie Cartwright

Casca .....Mark Sutherland

Decius Brutus .....Duncan Sykes

Cinna .....Nicola Bielicki

Metellus Cimber .....Simon McGovern

Trebonius .....Charles Anthony

Caius Ligarius .....Paul Davis

Mark Antony .....Anton Jungreuthmayer

Octavius Caesar .....Toby Agerbak

Lepidus .....Nicola Bielicki

Flavius (Tribune) .....Charles Anthony

Marullus (Tribune) .....Duncan Sykes

Cicero (Senator) .....Robert Ewen

Popilius (Senator) .....Lynette Alston

Portia (Brutus' wife) .....Poppy Charlton

Calpurnia (Caesar's wife) .....Mary-Anne Anaradoh

Soothsayer .....Paul Davis

Lucius (Brutus' servant) .....Lola Cranleigh

Cinna the Poet .....Paul Davis

Citizens .....Charles Anthony, Robert Ewen

Mark Sutherland, Duncan Sykes

Messengers/Servants .....Simon McGovern, Aaron Rice

Lola Cranleigh

### Officers to Brutus

Clitus .....Duncan Sykes

Volumnius .....Phil Stewart

### Officers to Cassius

Titinius .....Charles Anthony

Pindarus .....Aaron Rice

# Creative Team

Directed and designed by.....Mike Williams  
Stage Manager.....Lynette Alston  
Assistant Stage Manager .....Crystal Anthony  
Costume Supervision.....Nicola Bielicki  
Lighting Design and Operation.....Helene Smith  
Sound Design and Operation .....Phil Stewart

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes between Act 1 and Act 2

With thanks to Belmont Theatre Company, East Lane Theatre,  
Robert and Kaffe.

## Director's Note

We are delighted to have found a space which allows us to return to our home in Harrow after 15 years, to put on our 350<sup>th</sup> production. Working on this 425-year-old text by our greatest playwright has of course been a wonderful challenge but we didn't have to dig too deep to find profound relevance for the world today.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Mike Williams*

"I once answered Robert Kennedy's fears that his brother's presidency was too short to be remembered by pointing out that Caesar had been dictator of Rome for only three years. "Yes", he said, "it helps to have Shakespeare write about you". And so it has."

*Richard Goodwin (former adviser to John F Kennedy)*

"As the sun brightens, the shadow deepens."

*Neil Hannan*

## Julius Caesar

Caius Julius Caesar was born on 12 July 100 BCE. Mark Antony named the month "July" in his honour — it had been called Quintilis. Caesar married when he was only seventeen. Sulla, who had seized power in Rome, ordered him to divorce his wife because she was related to Sulla's enemies. Caesar refused and was driven into hiding. Eventually he was pardoned by Sulla who remarked "that boy will some day or another be the ruin of the aristocracy."

After Sulla's death in 78 BC Caesar rapidly gained renown as an orator. He spent vast sums of money to win the favour of the people, contracting enormous debts in doing so. He became the people's hero and was raised by them to every leading office of state. Granted legions by the Senate, Caesar then set out to conquer Gaul, a task which took nine years. In 49 BCE the Senate commanded him to disband his army, his term of

office as Proconsul being over. Caesar refused. There followed five years of civil war throughout the Roman territories, Caesar's legions against the Patricians and their followers.

Caesar never doubted he would be victorious. His soldiers, whom he always addressed as "comrades", loved and respected him, and in return he doubled their pay. It was these loyal and hardened veterans who led him to victory over all the leaders of the aristocracy, notably Pompey. Caesar returned to Rome in triumph, only to be assassinated four months later by the surviving leaders of that aristocracy he had "defeated". Yet the patrician class never recovered.

"Nerve-racking ... but it passed off tolerably. He was in very good humour. The talk at table was all of literature and serious subjects were avoided ... Just a quiet man-to-man talk. Still, he wasn't the sort of guest to whom you'd say, 'Look me up when you're passing this way again'. Once is enough."

*Cicero, writing to a friend after Caesar called at Cicero's villa, accompanied by his bodyguard of 2,000 men.*

## **Marcus Brutus**

Marcus Junius Brutus was born about 85 BCE, a member of one of the most famous Roman families. When the civil war between Caesar and the Patricians broke out in 49 BCE, Brutus joined the aristocratic party led by Pompey, even though Pompey had murdered Brutus's father 25 years before. After Caesar had defeated Pompey, he pardoned Brutus, brought him back to Rome and gave him many high offices. But Brutus, despite Caesar's favour, was inspired by the ideal of re-establishing Republican rule in Rome and joined the conspirators.

"It is, I may add, a speech of the utmost finish as far as sentiments are concerned, and in point of language not to be surpassed. Nevertheless, if I had had to handle that cause, I should have written with more fire ... Granting the kind of orator that our Brutus aims at being, and the opinion he entertains of the best style of speech, he has secured an unqualified success. Nothing could be more finished. But I have always aimed, rightly or wrongly, at something different."

*From a letter written by Julius Caesar, 44 BCE, about a speech given by Brutus.*

"Oh, how great oblivion possessed this Brutus! How much forgot he the nature of affairs! To suppose that by the death of one man there should not some other start up after him, that would usurp the commonweal."

*Seneca (4 BCE to CE 65)*

## **Caius Cassius**

Caius Cassius Longinus first rose to fame through his brilliant military victories in the East. He joined Pompey in the civil war against Caesar and surrendered to Caesar after Pompey's defeat. Caesar pardoned him and promised him the Governorship of Syria.

But Cassius joined the conspirators and murdered Caesar a few months before he received the province. After the assassination, Cassius still went to Syria to claim it, defeated the leaders sent by the Senate to take the province from him, and plundered it ruthlessly. Cassius then joined Brutus in the doomed battle against Octavius and Antony.

“Cassius hated the tyrant; making many complaints for the injuries he had done him; and amongst others, for that he had taken away his lions from him.”

*Plutarch (CE 46 to 120)*

## **Mark Antony**

Antony, born about 83 BCE, was the younger son of one of Rome’s best-known orators. He had a reputation both for dissipation and great courage. He gained military experience young, joined Caesar in Gaul in 54 BCE, and became one of Caesar’s most active partisans, fighting with him during the civil war against the Patricians and their followers. It was Antony who offered Caesar the crown in public at the festival of the Lupercalia. After Caesar’s murder, Antony tried to succeed to Caesar’s power. Octavius, the adopted son and great nephew of Caesar, joined the Senate to defeat Antony. But later Antony and Octavius joined forces and defeated the conspirators at the battle of Philippi. A year later he went for the first time to the East where he met Cleopatra.

## **Mob Violence**

“A tremendous roar arose . . . and a forest of naked arms struggled in the air like shrivelled branches of trees in a winter wind: all the fingers convulsively clutching at every weapon or semblance of a weapon that was thrown up from the depths below, no matter how far off. Every pulse and heart . . . was on high-fever strain and at high-fever heat. Every living creature there held life as of no account and was demented with a passionate readiness to sacrifice it. . .The eye could not detect one creature in the group free from the smear of blood . . . Hatchets, knives, bayonets, swords, all brought to be sharpened, were all red with it . . . as the frantic wielders of these weapons snatched them from the stream of sparks and tore away into the streets, the same red hue was red in their frenzied eyes...”

*A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens*

## **Julius Caesar - In Performance**

A Swiss doctor, Thomas Platter, visited London in 1599. During his stay in the city, he saw two plays, and, when he came to write an account of his travels, he had this to say of one of them:

“After lunch on September 21st, at about two o’clock, I and my party crossed the river, and there in the house with the thatched roof we saw an excellent performance of the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar with about fifteen characters; and after the play, according to their custom they did a most elegant and curious dance, two dressed in men’s clothes, and two in women’s.”

This play was almost certainly Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, which was therefore one of the first to be performed by Shakespeare's own Company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, at their new theatre, The Globe, which they had had built on Bankside in the early months of that year.

*Julius Caesar (New Penguin Shakespeare), edited by Norman Sanders*

Julius Caesar has been very popular since it was written. It was acted at Court, and consistently performed until the Puritans closed the theatres in 1642. After the Restoration it was played almost every year for a hundred years. The most famous actors of the 19th century appeared in it: Kemble, Macready, Charles Kean. In 1916 when Frank Benson acted the title role he was knighted by King George V with a prop sword used in the production.

The play has also been consistently performed in the United States.

In 1864 John Wilkes Booth (son of actor Junius Brutus Booth) played Antony in New York. Six months later he assassinated Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre in Washington DC. As he fled from the President's theatre box he shouted "Sic semper tyrannis" (thus always to tyrants), a phrase sometimes attributed to Marcus Brutus after Caesar's assassination.

A diary entry of Booth's after the assassination, discovered in a small red notebook on his person when he was shot, reveals the play's place in his psyche: "After being hunted like a dog last night I am here in despair. And why? For doing what Brutus was honored for."

In 1937 Orson Welles put on his own modern dress production. He directed the play with strong anti-Fascist overtones, playing Brutus. It was immensely successful and was described as a tragedy "close to the fatal currency of our time."

In the summer of 2017 a number of Republicans in the USA were incensed to learn that the New York Public Theater's production of Julius Caesar had Caesar made to look somewhat like (orange hair, red tie) – and gesturing even more like – Donald Trump.

## **Exhibition of 100 Years of Proscenium**

13 February to 29 April 2024, Headstone Manor Museum, Headstone Recreation Ground, Pinner View, Harrow HA2 6PX.



**Exhibition**

An exhibition exploring the 100-year history of Proscenium. Including a range of photographs, publicity material and recordings made by members. Free entry - further details to the left.

There will also be a 'Tuesday Talk' about the history of Proscenium at the Museum by Mark Sutherland on 16th April at 2pm. Book for the Tuesday Talk by scanning the code to the right (£2.50 ticket, £1 booking fee applies)



**Tuesday Talk**

# ABIGAIL'S PARTY

by

Mike Leigh



Performances:

Wed 15th, Thurs 16th, Fri 17th & Sat 18th

May @ 7.45pm

Matinees: Sat 18th & Sun 19th May @ 3.00pm

[www.eastlanetheatre.co.uk](http://www.eastlanetheatre.co.uk)

# Silver Lining

SANDI TOKSVIG

Belmont  
Theatre



This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd, on behalf of Samuel French Ltd

Wed 12th June to Sat 15th Jun 2024

BOX OFFICE 07917 324179

The Pump House Theatre  
Local Board Road Watford WD17 2JP

[www.belmonttheatre.co.uk](http://www.belmonttheatre.co.uk)

# Our Next Production

## Speaking in Tongues

By Andrew Bovell

Winner of the 1997 Australian Writers' Guild award for Best Stage Play, Andrew Bovell's compelling and sophisticated drama, *Speaking in Tongues*, explores the themes of love, marriage, infidelity and betrayal. Nine lives weave together in this tense, electrifying play about relationships between lovers, strangers, and the infinite ways people may wound one another.

Directed by Janet Harrison  
Wednesday 5th to Saturday 8th June 2024 7.45 pm  
Compass Theatre, Ickenham  
Box Office : 01895 250 615

### About Proscenium

Proscenium was founded in 1924. Since then, the aim of this experienced group has been to present classic and contemporary plays to as wide an audience as possible. Since 1990, performances have taken place at the Harrow Arts Centre and, more recently, at the Compass Theatre, Ickenham.

The company meets three times a week in Harrow for rehearsals, so that up to four plays are presented in each season. Social, fund-raising activities and play readings take place throughout the year, and new members are always welcome.

Secretary : Marion Chamberlain

Chair : Mike Williams

Contact us at [www.proscenium.org.uk](http://www.proscenium.org.uk)

### Kathleen Jones, 17th January 1933 to 7th January 2024



Kathleen was at the heart of Proscenium for more than 60 years, from when she joined as a teenager in the 1940s until 2016. She directed nearly 20 plays, and was involved in nearly 150. She was Artistic Director from 1980 until 1986 and filled many and various committee roles from 1950 onwards.

Her leading parts included Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Melinda in *The Recruiting Officer*, Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Bernarda Alba, Mother Courage, and Lady Macbeth.

She was a force of nature, unforgettable onstage and off, and will be sadly missed.