



STRATFORD
Shakespeare
Festival

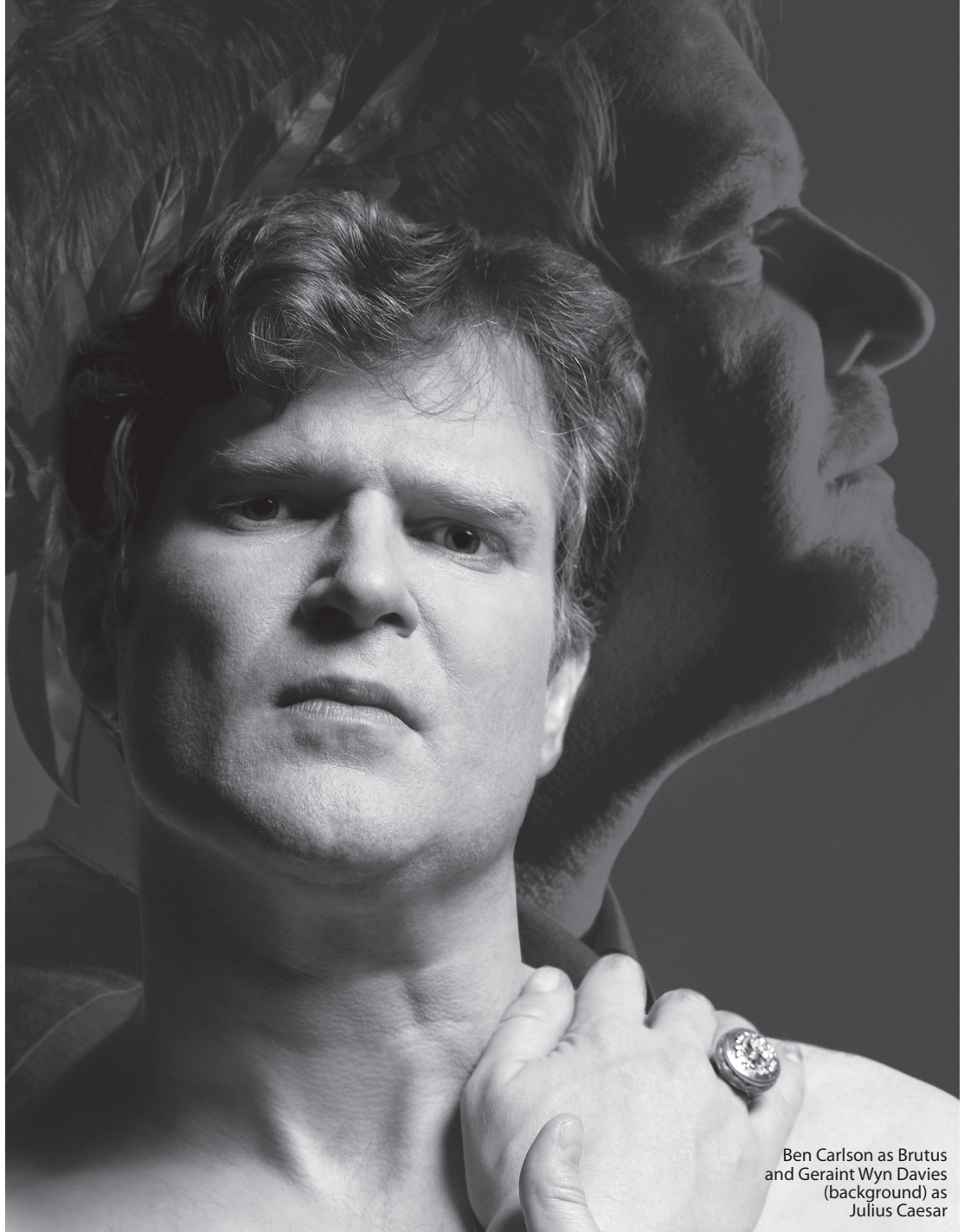
Julius Caesar

by William Shakespeare

Tools for
Teachers

09

Study
Guides



Ben Carlson as Brutus
and Geraint Wyn Davies
(background) as
Julius Caesar

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JULIUS CAESAR

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The Stratford Story

That Stratford, Ontario, is the home of the largest classical repertory theatre in North America is ultimately attributable to the dream of one man, Stratford-born journalist Tom Patterson.

In the early 1950s, seeing the economy of his home town endangered by the withdrawal of the railway industry that had sustained it for nearly 80 years, Patterson conceived the idea of a theatre festival devoted to the works of William Shakespeare. His vision won the support not only of Stratford City Council and an enthusiastic committee of citizens, but also of the legendary British actor and director Tyrone Guthrie, who agreed to become the proposed festival's first Artistic Director. The Stratford Shakespearean Festival of Canada was incorporated as a legal entity on October 31, 1952. A giant canvas tent was ordered from a firm in Chicago, and in the parklands by Stratford's Avon River work began on a concrete amphitheatre at the centre of which was to be a revolutionary thrust stage created to Guthrie's specifications by internationally renowned theatrical designer Tanya Moiseiwitsch.

From the balcony of that stage, on the night of July 13, 1953, actor Alec Guinness spoke the opening lines of *Richard III*: "Now is the winter of our discontent/ Made glorious summer by

this sun of York." Those words marked the triumphant end to what had sometimes seemed a hopeless struggle against the odds to turn Patterson's dream into a reality – and the beginning of an astonishing new chapter in Canadian theatre history. The other production of that inaugural six-week season, a modern-dress version of *All's Well That Ends Well*, opened the following night, confirming the opinion of celebrated novelist Robertson Davies that the new Festival was an achievement "of historic importance not only in Canada, but wherever theatre is taken seriously – that is to say, in every civilized country in the world."

Time proved the truth of Davies' words, for the Festival's pillared, porticoed thrust stage revolutionized the performance of classical and contemporary theatre in the latter half of the 20th century and inspired the design of more than a dozen other major venues around the world, including the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, the Beaumont Theatre at Lincoln Centre and, in England, the Chichester Festival Theatre, the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield and the Olivier Theatre at the Royal National Theatre in London. Over the years, the Festival has made some amendments to the original design of Moiseiwitsch's stage, without changing its essential format.

At the end of the 1956 season, the giant canvas tent that had housed the Festival's first four seasons was dismantled for the last time to make way for a new and permanent facility to be erected around the existing stage. Designed by architect Robert Fairfield, the new building would be one of the most distinctive in the world of the performing arts: its circular floor plan and crenellated roof paying striking tribute to the Festival's origins under canvas.

In the years since its first season, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival has set benchmarks for the production not only of Shakespeare, Molière, the ancient Greeks and other great dramatists of the past, but also of such 20th-century masters as Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, Anton Chekhov, Henrik Ibsen, Eugene O'Neill, and Tennessee Williams. In addition to acclaimed productions of the best in operetta and musical theatre, it has also showcased – and in many cases premièred – works by outstanding Canadian and other contemporary playwrights.

Its artists have included the finest actors, directors and designers in Canada, as well as many from abroad. Among the internationally renowned performers who have graced its stages are Alan Bates, Brian Bedford, Douglas Campbell, Len Cariou, Brent Carver, Hume Cronyn, Colm Feore, Megan Follows, Lorne Greene, Paul Gross, Uta Hagen, Julie Harris, Martha Henry, William Hutt, James Mason, Eric McCormack, Loreena McKennitt, Richard Monette, John Neville, Nicholas Pennell, Christopher Plummer, Sarah Polley, Douglas Rain, Kate Reid, Jason Robards, Paul Scofield, William Shatner, Maggie Smith, Jessica Tandy, Peter Ustinov, and Al Waxman.

Drawing audiences of more than 500,000 each year, the Festival season now runs from April to November, with productions being presented in four unique theatres, and includes a full program of Beyond the Stage activities including concert recitals, discussion sessions, lectures, and readings by celebrated authors. It offers an extensive program of educational and enrichment activities for students, teachers, and other patrons, and operates its own in-house school of professional artist development: The Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre.



ABOUT *JULIUS CAESAR*

The Playwright

William Shakespeare

Born in Stratford-upon-Avon, a small Warwickshire town, in 1564, William Shakespeare was the eldest son of John Shakespeare, a glover, and Mary Arden, the daughter of a wealthy farmer. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but baptismal records point to it being the same as that of his death, April 23. He probably attended what is now the Edward VI Grammar School, where he would have studied Latin literature, and at 18, he married a farmer's daughter, Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna, born in 1583, and, two years later, the twins Hamnet (who died in childhood) and Judith.

Nothing further is known of his life until 1592, when his earliest known play, the first part of *Henry VI*, became a hit in London, where Shakespeare was now working as an actor.

Soon afterwards, an outbreak of the plague forced the temporary closure of the theatres, and Shakespeare turned for a while to writing poetry. By 1594, however, he was back in the theatre, acting with the Lord Chamberlain's Men. He quickly established himself as one of London's most successful dramatists,

with an income that enabled him, in 1597, to buy a mansion back in Stratford. In 1599 he became a shareholder in London's newly built Globe Theatre.

In 1603, Shakespeare's company was awarded a royal patent, becoming known as the King's Men. Possibly as early as 1610, the playwright retired to his home in Stratford-upon-Avon, living there – and continuing to invest in real estate – until his death on April 23, 1616. He is buried in the town's Holy Trinity Church.



In the first collected edition of his works in 1623, fellow dramatist Ben Jonson called him a man “not of an age, but for all time”. Not only did Shakespeare write some of the most popular plays of all time, but he was a very prolific writer, writing 38 (canonically accepted) works in 23 years. His work covered

many subjects and styles, including comedies, tragedies, histories, and romances, all bearing his hallmark expansive plots, extraordinary language, and humanist themes. Shakespeare enjoyed great popularity in his lifetime, and 400 years later, he is still the most produced playwright in the world.

ABOUT *JULIUS CAESAR*

A Shakespearean Timeline

- 1558 Elizabeth I crowned.
- 1564 William Shakespeare born.
- 1572 Actors not under the protection of a patron declared rogues and vagabonds.
- 1576 “The Theatre”, the first public playhouse in London, opens.
- 1577 “The Curtain”, London’s second playhouse, opens.
- 1578 James VI (later James I of England) takes over government of Scotland.
- 1579 Publication of North’s English translation of Plutarch’s *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*.
- 1580 Francis Drake returns in triumph from his voyage around the world; travelling players perform at Stratford.
- 1582 Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway; Susanna is born six months later and the twins Hamnet and Judith in 1585.
- 1587 “The Rose” theatre opens in London. Mary Queen of Scots is executed.
- 1588 Spanish Armada defeated.
- 1589 Shakespeare finds work as an actor in London; he lives apart from his wife for 21 years.
- 1590-1591 *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Taming of the Shrew.*
- 1591 *2 Henry VI, 3 Henry VI.*
- 1592 Thousands die of plague in London; theatres closed. *1 Henry VI, Titus Andronicus, Richard III.*
- 1593 *The Comedy of Errors.*
- 1594 Shakespeare becomes a shareholder of his theatre company, The Lord Chamberlain’s Men.
- 1594 *Love’s Labour’s Lost.*
- 1595 *Richard II, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night’s Dream.*
- 1596 Shakespeare’s son, Hamnet, dies.
- 1596-1597 *King John, The Merchant of Venice, 1 Henry IV.*
- 1597-1598 *The Merry Wives of Windsor, 2 Henry IV, Much Ado About Nothing.*
- 1598 “The Globe” theatre built.
- 1598-1599 *Henry V, **Julius Caesar**.*
- 1599-1600 *As You Like It.*
- 1600-1601 *Hamlet, Twelfth Night.*
- 1601 Shakespeare’s patron arrested for treason following the Essex rebellion; he is later pardoned.

- 1602 *Troilus and Cressida.*
- 1603 Queen Elizabeth dies and is succeeded by James I; Shakespeare's theatre company becomes the King's Men.
- 1603 *Measure for Measure, Othello.*
- 1604 Work begins on the King James Bible.
- 1604-1605 *All's Well That Ends Well, Timon of Athens, King Lear (Q)*
- 1606 *Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra.*
- 1607 *Pericles, Prince of Tyre.*
- 1608 *Coriolanus.*
- 1609 *The Winter's Tale.*
- 1610 *King Lear (F), Cymbeline.*
- 1610 Shakespeare retires to Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 1611 *The Tempest.*
- 1611 King James version of the bible published.
- 1613 *Henry VIII (All is True), The Two Noble Kinsmen.*
- 1613 "The Globe" theatre burns down.
- 1616 Shakespeare dies in Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 1623 The first folio of Shakespeare's collected plays is published.

* some dates are approximate

ABOUT *JULIUS CAESAR*

Synopsis of the Plot

Having defeated the sons of his late political rival, Pompey, the great general and statesman Julius Caesar has returned in triumph to Rome. His evident popularity with the common people and the actions of his friend and comrade Mark Antony in publicly offering him a crown are of great concern to a cadre of senators, including Cassius and Marcus Brutus, who fear that Caesar indeed plans to assume the powers of a king and overthrow the Roman republic.

Brutus is torn between his feelings of friendship for Caesar and his concern for Rome; eventually, however, he is persuaded to join in a conspiracy to assassinate Caesar on the Ides of March. When that day dawns, despite the warnings of a soothsayer and the pleas of his wife, Calphurnia (who has dreamed that she saw her husband's statue running with blood), Caesar resolves to go to the Capitol as planned. There the conspirators stab him to death.

Brutus then addresses the crowd, assuring them that Caesar's ambition made the assassination necessary; Mark Antony, however, counters with an inspired piece of rhetoric that succeeds in provoking a riot against the conspirators. Fleeing the city, Brutus and Cassius raise an army, while Antony and Octavius, Caesar's heir, take control of Rome. The opposing forces meet at Philippi, where the fate of the republic is decided in a climactic battle.

ABOUT *JULIUS CAESAR*
Cast of Characters

Julius Caesar

Triumvirs after the death of Julius Caesar

Octavius Caesar

Mark Antony

M. Aemilius Lepidus

Senators

Cicero

Publius

Popillius Lena

Conspirators against Julius Caesar

Marcus Brutus

Cassius

Caska

Trebonius

Ligarius

Decius Brutus

Metellus Cimber

Cinna

Tribunes

Flavius

Marullus

Artemidorus, *a teacher of rhetoric*

A Soothsayer

Cinna, *a poet*

Friends to Brutus and Cassius

Lucilius

Titinius

Messala

Young Cato

Volumnius

Servants to Brutus

Varrus

Clitus

Claudius

Strato

Lucius

Dardanius

Pindarus, *servant to Cassius*

Calphurnia, *wife to Caesar*

Portia, *wife to Brutus*

ABOUT *JULIUS CAESAR*
2009 Stratford Shakespeare Festival Production

Avon Theatre, May 23 to October 31, 2009

Artistic Team

Director	James MacDonald
Set & Costume Designer	David Boechler
Lighting Designer	Christopher Dennis
Sound Designer	Peter McBoyle

Cast List

Julius Caesar	Geraint Wyn Davies
Octavius Caesar	Dion Johnstone
Mark Antony	Jonathan Goad
Cicero	John Innes
Publius	David Collins
Popilius Lena	Laura Condlin
Marcus Brutus	Ben Carlson
Cassius	Tom Rooney
Caska	Michael Spencer-Davis
Trebonius	Sanjay Talwar
Ligarius	Ian Deakin
Decius Brutus	Gareth Potter
Metellus Cimber	Tim MacDonald
Cinna	Timothy D. Stickney
Flavius	Jonathan Purdon
Murellus	André Sills
Artemidorus	Ian Lake
Soothsayer	Victor Ertmanis
Cinna, the poet	Skye Brandon
Titinius	Bruce Godfree
Messala	Kevin Hanchard
Young Cato	Jon de Leon
Varrus	Sophia Walker
Clitus	Quincy Armorer
Lucius	Nathan Klassen
Dardanius	Matt Steinberg
Pindarus	Christopher Prentice
Calphurnia	Yanna McIntosh
Portia	Cara Ricketts
Cobbler	Colin Heath

Also appearing: Alana Hawley, Araya Mengesha, Jennifer Paterson, Asha Vijayasingham, Jonathan Woolley (understudy)

JULIUS CAESAR

Activities

The Rumour Mill

Time needed: Two class periods

Divide your class in half and have each group sit in a line. Play a game of Broken Telephone in which you give both lines the same phrase to pass on. The phrase should be a wild and outrageous bit of news or gossip about a well-known figure.

Next, give the class a statement with which they must either completely agree or completely disagree. There is no in-between. The statement should be an issue in the news or at school (eg. "School should be in session for 12 months a year"). Instruct the students to gather on one side of the room if they agree, and on the other side if they disagree. Briefly discuss and debate the choices the students have made and why they made them. Is anyone persuaded to change sides?

Have the two groups read through Act 1 Scene 2, lines 83 to 181, and Act 2 Scene 1, lines 86 to 228, noting how Cassius and the conspirators turn Brutus against Caesar. Have the students decide which lines in these scenes would spur Brutus to action and note how arguments are constructed for maximum effect.

Now, go back to the issue you debated about earlier. Continue the discussion but this time make sure the students employ tactics they

discovered in the scenes they just read.

Finally, have each group write and rehearse a modern-day scene in which one or two students use persuasive arguments to convince the others to join their cause. Students can also create props like a campaign letter or a propaganda billboard. Each group presents their scene to the other group, and hands in their support materials.

Insults

Students are each given a card which has an insult from the play *Julius Caesar* written upon it. In pairs, students rehearse the insult to themselves.

Students roam around the classroom in a random fashion, much like at a cocktail party or reception. When a prearranged signal sounds (a bell, hands clapping, freeze. etc.), students stop and hurl the insult at the closest person to them.

Students form two lines facing one another and exchange insults in front of the entire class.

Extension

Students can add appropriate gestures or actions to the delivery of their insult.

You block, you stone, you worse than senseless thing!

Your coward lips did from their colour fly.

You fat, sleek-headed man!

You utter such a deal of stinking
breath!

I dare not laugh for fear of opening
my lips and receiving your bad air.

What rubbish and what offal!

You fleering tell-tale!

Where wilt thou find a cavern dark
enough to mask thy monstrous
visage?

You have some sick offense within
your mind.

I spurn thee like a cur out of my
way!

Your purpled hands do reek and
smoke.

You are a slight unmeritable man,
meet to be sent on errands.

You are a tried and valiant soldier.
So is my horse!

You barren-spirited fellow!

I had rather be a dog, and bay at
the moon, than such a one as you.

Shall I be frightened when a madman
stares?

I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my
laughter.

I do find you cowardly and vile.

Hence, home, you idle creature!

Thou naughty knave!

Thou saucy fellow!

You have a lean and hungry look.

What a blunt fellow!

You are most bloody, fiery, and
most terrible.

You old feeble carrion!

I'll hew you like a carcass fit for
hounds.

You stare upon me with ungentle
looks.

You vile contagion!

You dwell but in the suburbs of my
good pleasure.

You are a savage spectacle.

I do not talk of you but as a
property.

You are a hot friend cooling.

You deceitful jade!

Away, slight man.

Go show your slaves how choleric
you are.

Must I stand and crouch under your
testy humour?

Do not presume too much upon my
love.

There is no terror in your threats.

I do not like your faults.

JULIUS CAESAR

Resources

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JULIUS CAESAR:

- O'Brien, Peggy, ed. *Shakespeare Set Free. Book One: Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, and A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 1993.

WEB RESOURCES:

- Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet, <http://shakespeare.palomar.edu>
- Sh:in:E Shakespeare in Europe, <http://www.unibas.ch/shine>
- Feste: database of productions at the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, <http://www.pads.ahds.as.uk:81/shakespeare>
- Encyclopaedia Britannica presents: Shakespeare and the Globe: Then and Now, <http://search.eb.com/shakespeare>
- Shakespeare's Life and Times, <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Library/SLT/intro/introsubj.html>
- Shakespeare Online, <http://www.shakespeare-online.com>
- Poor Yorick CD & VIDEO Emporium, www.bardcentral.com
- Movie Review Query Engine, www.mrqe.com
- Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com

JULIUS CAESAR ONLINE:

MIT Shakespeare Homepage: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare,
<http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/>

JULIUS CAESAR ON FILM, VIDEO, and DVD:

1950. Directed by David Bradley. Starring Charlton Heston, Harold Tasker and David Bradley.

1953. Directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. Starring Marlon Brando, Louis Calhern, John Gielgud, James Mason and Greer Garson.

1970. Directed by Stuart Burge. Starring Charlton Heston, Jason Robards, and Richard Chamberlain.