

Aquila Theatre
presents
William Shakespeare's

Julius Caesar

adapted for the stage by Peter Meineck

Cast
Listed alphabetically

Calpurnia/Cinna/Octavius/Ensemble	Elizabeth Belfast
Antony/Cimber/Clitus/Ensemble	James Counihan
Casca/Portia/Lucilius/Ensemble	Leda Douglas
Brutus/Ensemble	Katie Housley
Caesar/Cicero/Cinna the Poet/Lepidus/Messala/Ensemble	Conner Keef
Cassius/Artemidorus/Ensemble	James Lavender

Creative Team

Director	Peter Meineck
Lighting and Scenic Designer	Bob Rogers
Projection Designer	Lianne Arnold
Costume Designer	Kara Branch
Sound Designer	Alex Duncker

Production Team

Technical Director	Bob Rogers
Production Stage Manager	Alex Duncker
Assistant Stage Manager	Cynthia Caridad
Company Manager	Brian Bailey
Production Manager	Bob Rogers

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.

Please be advised, this production includes sounds of war and sudden gunshots.

The taking of photographs or the use of any kind of recording device is strictly prohibited.

This Performance and affiliated workshops and readings are part of Aquila Theatre's Warrior Chorus: American Democracy program made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.



This production is supported in part by New City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts

COMPANY NOTE

Aquila Theatre Company's production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* follows the rise and fall of one of history's most notorious leaders. Set in a world of political intrigue and strained domestic relationships, the production explores the moral and political dilemma of Brutus. Should she join the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar, the conquering hero and her trusted friend? Or should she allow one man's tyrannical ambition to overcome the very ideals that society was founded upon? The choice that Brutus makes has the power to destroy the world order and to ignite a fierce civil war. Aquila's production asks the audience to consider the price of democracy and freedom and the consequences that can befall a society when it is asked to defend its core beliefs.

SYNOPSIS

Act One: Julius Caesar has returned to Rome after defeating the armies of his rival Pompey. Some Roman Senators fear that Caesar's growing power threatens the Roman Republic. On his way to a celebration, Caesar is warned by a soothsayer (or prophet) to "beware the Ides of March" (the middle of March, the 15th). Cassius tells Brutus that Caesar behaves as if he were a god, and Caesar voices his distrust of Cassius. Casca reports to Cassius and Brutus that Antony offered Caesar the crown, which he refused three times. Cassius determines to use any means necessary to turn Brutus against Caesar. The night brings violent storms, comets, and other strange phenomena. Casca, Cicero and Cassius all interpret the appearance of these natural wonders in a different way. The conspirators against Caesar arrange to meet at Brutus' house.

Act Two: Brutus is persuaded that Caesar's death is necessary for the Republic. She reluctantly joins the assassination plot, but rejects Cassius' proposal that Antony also be killed. Brutus' wife, Portia, suspects that she has some terrible secret. To prove she is tough enough to handle the truth, Portia shows Brutus that she has wounded herself. It is now The Ides of March. Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, has had a horrible dream about his murder. She begs him to stay home. He agrees, until Casca arrives and persuades him he has nothing to fear. Escorted by Brutus and Casca, Caesar leaves for the Capitol.

Act Three: At the Capitol, the soothsayer again warns Caesar of the danger of this fateful day. While Antony is absent, the conspirators murder Caesar. Upon his return, Antony says that if Brutus can offer a reasonable explanation for Caesar's murder, he will become Brutus' follower. Over the objections of Cassius, Brutus agrees to allow Antony to speak at Caesar's funeral. At the funeral, Brutus convinces the crowd that Caesar was a tyrant who had to be killed to save the Republic. Antony, facing a now hostile audience, delivers a brilliant speech that ends up turning the people against the conspirators. Brutus and Cassius must flee Rome to escape the rage of the people over Caesar's murder. A poet named Cinna is seized by an angry mob who beat him up merely for having the same name as one of the conspirators.

Act Four: Two armies are at war: the conspirators who killed Caesar versus Caesar's son, Octavius, aided by Mark Antony. At Brutus' camp, she and Cassius quarrel, then resolve their differences. Brutus reveals that Portia has committed suicide. Once again Brutus overrules Cassius' strategic advice; she decides to take the battle to the enemy instead of waiting for the enemy to come to them. Late at night, Brutus is visited by the ghost of Caesar. The ghost says that Brutus will see him again at Phillipi.

Act Five:

The leaders of the two armies meet at Phillipi and exchange insults and accusations. Cassius and Brutus part as friends as they go off to prepare for battle. The battle begins. The conspirators appear to be winning. Mistakenly believing that his friend Messala has been captured, Cassius commits suicide. Messala brings word of victory to Cassius, but find him dead. Messala kills himself in grief. Brutus discovers the bodies and fears that Caesar is having his revenge. With Cassius dead, the battle turns against the conspirators. Rather than be taken prisoner, Brutus kills herself. Octavius and Antony discover her corpse. Mark Antony sadly proclaims Brutus to have been "the noblest Roman of them all."

CAST BIOS

ELIZABETH BELFAST (*Calpurnia/Cinna/Octavius/Ensemble*) is elated to be joining the Aquila Theatre Company and would like to thank Desiree for allowing this to be her first professional theatre credit. She began her BFA in Acting at Texas State University and has since transferred to the Los Angeles Film School to pursue her Bachelor's in Screenwriting. Recent credits include Aquila's most recent tour of *Macbeth (Understudy)* and *The Great Gatsby (Understudy)* as well as *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings* (Daisy), *Stupid F*cking Bird* (Mash), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet). She would like to thank her parents, Tracey and Brennon Belfast, for always trusting her to follow her dreams, her partner Tanner for his unwavering love and support, and Bob Adams and Jake Dogias for giving her the confidence to pursue acting and being the greatest teacher an actor could ever wish for.

JAMES COUNIHAN (*Antony/Cimber/Clitus/Ensemble*) is a New York based actor originally from Pittsburgh, PA. He received his BFA from Ithaca College and this will mark his second national tour with Aquila. Other credits include City Theatre, Ithaca Shakespeare Company, and Columbia University's Graduate Theatre Department. James wants to thank his family and friends for their constant love and support. James-Counihan.com

LEDA DOUGLAS (*Casca/Portia/Lucilius/Ensemble*) is a British actor with an extensive background in dance and choreography (Shaftesbury Theatre, The Curve). She trained in Lecoq's method before graduating from The Oxford School of Drama in 2018. Recent theatre credits include: *Heart of the Mind* (National Theatre), *Shudder* (Soho theatre), *Henry VIII, The Merchant of Venice, Nuclear Future* (The Lowry), *The Night Before Christmas* (Polka Theatre), as well as leading roles in; *The Time Machine, The Gunpowder Plot* and *Alice in Wonderland*. Short film credits include: *BLACK MONEY, HOUSEKEEPING, I AM, and WOMAN TO WOMAN*; including her production company's (Mixed Productions) first short, *DINAH*, now touring the film festival circuit.

KATIE HOUSLEY (*Brutus/Ensemble*) is a Canadian stage and screen actress based in New York. Selected theatre credits include: *Twelfth Night* (Classical Theatre Project), *Encore!* (U.S. National Tour), *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* (Alliance Repertory Theatre), and *Disgraced* (Black Box Studios). Her play, *Midnight on a Monday*, won the Playwrights Guild of Canada/Toronto Fringe Festival's 24 hour playwriting contest before receiving its world premiere at New York's WorkShop Theatre as part of the Midtown International Theatre Festival where it went on to receive a nomination for Best Short Subject. Her other plays include *Karaoke Confessional* (NYC's UnFringed Festival at the Secret Theatre), and *Homecoming* (New Writers Series at Toronto's Paprika Festival). Her film work has premiered at various film festivals throughout North America and Europe. She is a graduate of the University of Toronto and of the conservatory at Stella Adler.

CONNER KEEF (*Caesar/Cicero/Cinna the Poet/Lepidus/Messala/Ensemble*) Brooklyn-based, Kentucky-born actor. Training includes: Williamstown Theatre Festival ('18), The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey ('19), BFA Acting - Western Kentucky University ('19). Credits include: Marlowe's *Faustus* (The Secret Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* (Spokehouse Productions), Ken Ludwig's *The Three Musketeers* (The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey), *The Great Gatsby, Macbeth* (Aquila Theatre Company). As one might guess, Conner's readiness to step into this field of work is owed to their teachers, friends, family, and not least of all, their mother.

JAMES LAVENDER (*Cassius/Artemidorus/Ensemble*) Theatre credits: For Aquila Theatre; *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, *An Enemy Of The People*, *Hamlet*, *The Tempest*, *Sense & Sensibility*; *Henry V* (Antic Disposition) *The War of The Worlds* (Layered Reality); *Sleeping Beauty*, (Rhodes Arts Complex); *Loves Labours Lost*, *Twelfth Night*, *Comedy Of Errors*, *The Importance Of Being Earnest* (Oxford Shakespeare Company); *Peter Pan*, *Cinderella*, *Jack & The Beanstalk* (Sheringham Little Theatre); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Lord Chamberlain's Men); *Philoctetes* (BAM New York); *Macbeth* (Gym at Judson Theatre, New York); *Adventures in Wonderland*, *Supermarket Shakespeare* (Teatro Vivo); *Aladdin* (Hazlitt Theatre); *The Taming of The Shrew*, *As You Like It* (Groundlings Theatre); *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Millfield Theatre); *Headlines* (BAC); *Sleeping Beauty* (Georgian Theatre Royal); *The Jungle Book* (Birmingham Stage Company); *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Greenwich Playhouse); *Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising* (Arcola Theatre). James trained at Rose Bruford.

CREATIVE & PRODUCTION BIOS

PETER MEINECK (*Director*) Peter Meineck founded Aquila Theatre in London in 1991. He holds the endowed chair of Professor of Classics in the Modern World at New York University. He has directed and produced over 50 classical plays and published widely on ancient Greek drama. <https://as.nyu.edu/faculty/peter-meineck.html>.

LIANNE ARNOLD (*Projection Design*) Lianne is a video & scenic designer and interdisciplinary artist working in theater, opera, music, dance, film, & art installation. For Aquila: *1984*, *Hamlet*, *Sense and Sensibility*. Other recent performance & film projects include *Lil Buck & Jon Boogz' Love Heals All Wounds* (projections / CAP UCLA & MOVE on Netflix), Prospect Theater Co.'s *VISION Series & The Hello Girls* (scenic & projections), HBO's *The Lady and the Dale* (animations), *Jazz Singer* (projections / Abrons Artspace), *Oscar at the Crown* (projections / 3 Dollar Bill), *Words on the Street* (co-creator & projections / Baruch), Joseph Keckler's *Let Me Die* (projections / Opera Philadelphia/FringeArts) and Joseph Keckler's *Train With No Midnight* (projections / Prototype Festival/HERE). When the Covid-19 shutdown happened in March 2020, Lianne was working as the associate projection designer on *The Lehman Trilogy* on Broadway. Lianne teaches Video Design/Creative Technologies at The New School and is a member of Wingspace Design Collective. MFA from CalArts. www.liannearnold.com.

BRIAN BAILEY (*Company Manager*) Brian hails from the rural Appalachian region of Ohio where he grew up on a pig and cattle farm with his family. He graduated from Northern Kentucky University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre and had a career for several years on Broadway and National Tours in shows like *CATS*, *THE LION KING*, and *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*. While at home during CoVid pandemic Brian completed courses in Dinosaur Paleobiology with the University of Alberta, was a Zookeeper for over 75 species, taught World History at a middle school, became an editorial contributor for Getty Images, and was a radio personality for a country music station! After a decade long career at sea serving as a Cruise Director and spending two seasons in Antarctica on expedition vessels, Brian is thrilled to return to land and return to theatre as the company manager for Aquila Theatre.

KARA BRANCH (*Costume Designer*) is a New York based costume designer. Her recent design projects include *Fidelio* with Heartbeat Opera Company, *Machinal* at Boston Conservatory at Berklee and *The End of Hester*, *Imagining Madoff* and *Brecht: Call and Response* with New Light Theater Company. Recent Assistant design credits include *Hamilton*

(Broadway, National Tours and International Germany Tour), *Slave Play* (Broadway), *The Secret Life of Bees* at Atlantic Theater Company, *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* at Signature Theater Company and *Detroit '67* at The McCarter Theater. karabbranchdesigns.com

CYNTHIA CARIDAD (*Assistant Stage Manager*). Cynthia got her start in stage management with Santa Monica Rep's 2011 production of *The Tempest* in Santa Monica, CA. After graduating with a BA at California State University Fullerton, she worked as a stage manager on cruise ships for 6 years. She is now based in New York. Selected Regional: ...what the end will be (PA), EgoManiac (PSM), Luisa Fernanda (PSM), Salir/Dido (PSM). She is grateful for her family's support throughout all her adventures.

ALEX DUNCKER (*Production Stage Manager*) Hailing from beautiful Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Alex began her love affair with the performing arts at her local western dinner theatre. After progressing from showgirl to stage manager, she ventured east to pursue a Theatre degree from the University of Vermont. Since moving to New York in 2016, Alex has dabbled in film, managed several inventive new works (*Meshahnye*, *Late Night at the Serpent*, *Codependent*, *Cartography*, *Voyeur*), and produced a pop-up theatre (*Destiny Manifests*) in a repurposed storefront that presented Sam Shepard's *Fool for Love* alongside original poetry, dance, live music, visual and performance art. Now, Alex is elated to be back on the road for her fourth tour with Aquila to continue her career of working with women-led artistic endeavors.

BOB ROGERS (*Production Manager, Set & Lighting Designer, Technical Director*) is excited to be back with Aquila theatre for another exciting season. Bob's technical career started in 2005 at Crossville Tennessee. Since then, he has worked on cruise ships, theme parks, tours, regional theatres, circuses, and even 100 foot diameter balloons. Bob has done technical theatre in every state of the continental US, Guam, and even China.

AQUILA THEATRE

Aquila Theatre is one of the foremost producers of classical theatre in the United States and has been bringing audiences world-class actors, captivating designs, innovative adaptations, and impactful direction since 1991. Aquila Theatre also provides extensive educational offerings and is an award-winning leader in the field of public arts and humanities programming. Aquila Theatre's mission is to create innovative interpretations of the classics for today's audiences. By diversifying the classics and expanding the canon, Aquila seeks to enhance the plurality of our perspectives.

Aquila regularly produces in New York, most recently at The Brooklyn Academy of Music, GK Arts in DUMBO, and ART/NY. The company also visits 50 - 60 American cities per year with a program of two plays, workshops, and educational programming, and is under the Artistic Directorship of Desiree Sanchez. Aquila has been awarded numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, The National Endowment for the Humanities, from which it received a Chairman's Special Award, the New York State Councils for the Arts and Humanities, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Aquila has performed at the White House under the Bush and Obama administrations and has performed for the U.S Supreme Court and for the National Council on the Arts. Aquila was also recently invited by Lin-Manuel Miranda to

perform at the U.S. Capitol in support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for its groundbreaking theatre and humanities program: The Warrior Chorus.

PRODUCTIONS IN NEW YORK CITY: Aquila is a major part of New York's theatrical landscape, producing a regular season of plays. Aquila recently produced: *The Trojan War: Our Warrior Chorus*, based on the writings of Homer, Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles and reimagined through the experiences of modern day military veterans at Brooklyn Academy of Music; *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *Philoctetes* at GK ArtsCenter in Brooklyn; a staged workshop production of *A Female Philoctetes* at BAM Fisher's Hillman Studio as part of our YouStories program; Euripides' *Herakles* at BAM; Shakespeare's *Macbeth* at the GYM at Judson; Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* at the Skirball Center for the Performing Arts at New York University; Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*; and Homer's *The Iliad: Book One* Off-Broadway at the Lucille Lortel Theatre.

A MAJOR ANNUAL NATIONAL TOUR: Aquila is the foremost producer of touring classical theatre in the United States, visiting 50-60 American cities per year. Recent past touring seasons include: George Orwell's *1984* and Homer's *Odyssey* (2019/2020) Shelley's *Frankenstein* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2018/19); *Hamlet* and Austen's *Sense & Sensibility* (2017/18); *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Murder on the Nile*, as well as *The Trojan War: Our Warrior Chorus* (2016/17); *Romeo and Juliet* and Doyle's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (2015/16); *The Tempest* and Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (2014/15); *Twelfth Night* and Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (2013/14); *Taming of the Shrew* and Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (2012/13); *Macbeth* and Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2011/12); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (2010/11); *As You Like It* and Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (2009/10).

INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCES: Aquila has appeared in numerous festivals and at venues around the world including performances in London, Holland, Germany, Greece, Scotland, Canada, Bermuda and at the Festival of the Aegean in Syros, Greece and the Michael Cacoyannis Foundation in Athens. Most recently Aquila performed *A Female Philoctetes* in Athens, Greece and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* at New York University's campus, La Pietra, in Florence, Italy as part of their summer event series.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS: Aquila is dedicated to theatre arts education and produces three major initiatives: *Workshop America*, a nationwide program that provides an opportunity for people to share in the art of Aquila; *Theatre Breakthrough*, which brings America's schools to the stage; and *Hear Our Call!*, a drama training program for NY based teens from immigrant, refugee, asylee, and underserved families.

WARRIOR CHORUS: AMERICAN DEMOCRACY - The Warrior Chorus is a national initiative that trains veterans to present innovative public programs based on ancient literature, presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities. It will create national discussions around Democracy led by the people who fight for it. Staged readings, workshops and a series of discussions around the meaning and future of Democracy will tour in tandem with this year's national tour of *Julius Caesar* and *Pride and Prejudice*.

AQUILA STAFF:

Executive Artistic Director
Founding Director
Company Management
Accountants

Desiree Sanchez
Peter Meineck
Brian Bailey
InsightLedger

Represented by OPUS 3 Artists



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