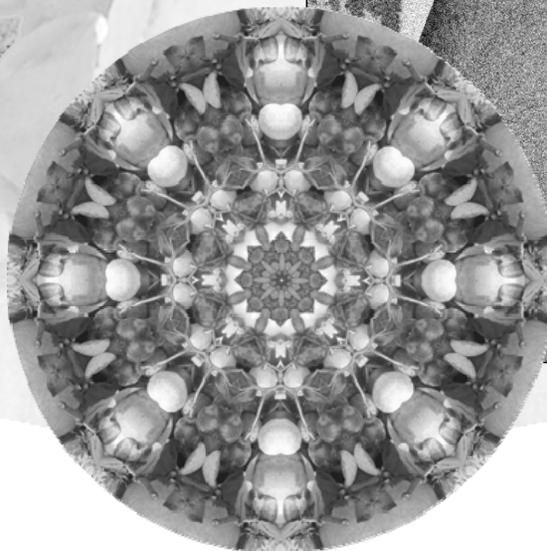
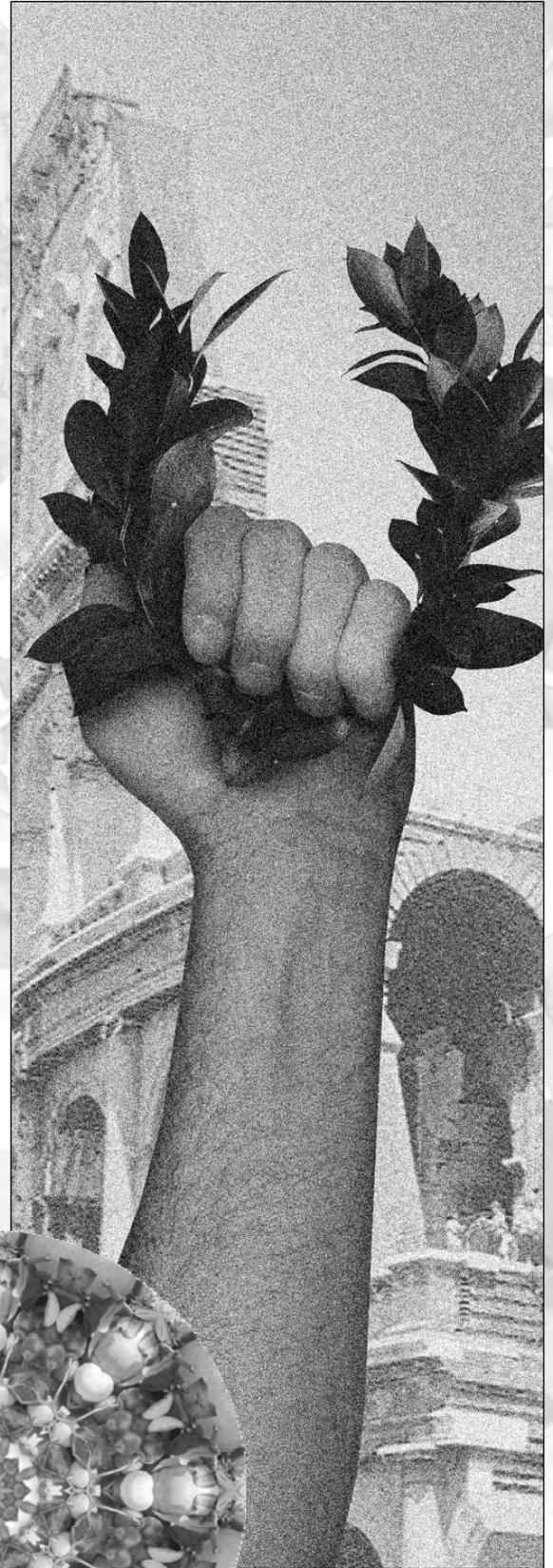




TPAC Education's
Humanities Outreach in
Tennessee presents

**AQUILA THEATRE
COMPANY
JULIUS
CAESAR**



2007-2008
Teacher
Guidebook

DEAR TEACHERS,

We are fortunate to be able to share with you the very excellent guidebook from The State Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey. They have been generous to share their work on-line and to allow us to re-print it.

We wanted to include all of their credits and sponsor information, and so did not edit their table of contents page. Obviously, all information about their theater space does not apply to the TPAC/HOT presentation of Aquila Theater Company's *Julius Caesar*, but additional production information is all correct. Additional resources from The State Theatre guidebook are listed at right.

The page nine activity and the final page twelve have been omitted from this printing; otherwise we have made no changes to the guidebook. To read the original activity go to http://www.statetheatrenj.org/media/pdfs/keynotes_juliuscaesar.pdf. or <http://www.aquilatheatre.com/nowplayingcaesar.html>.

TPAC EDUCATION



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BOOKS

- Caesar: Life of a Colossus*, by Adrian Goldsworthy. Yale University Press, 2006
- Folklore of Shakespeare*, by T. F. Thiselton Dyer. Kessinger Publishing, 2004 (information about superstition, astrology, etc. in Shakespeare's day)
- The Friendly Shakespeare : A Thoroughly Painless Guide to the Best of the Bard*, by Norrie Epstein. Penguin USA, 1994
- Julius Caesar*, by William Shakespeare. Cambridge School Shakespeare, Timothy Seward, editor. Cambridge University Press, 1992
- The World of Shakespeare*, by Anna Claybourne & Rebecca Treays. Usborne, 2001

VIDEO

- Julius Caesar*. The 1953 film adaptation of Shakespeare's play, starring Marlon Brando and James Mason, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. Warner Home Video. DVD
- Shakespeare: A Day at the Globe*. Guidance Associates Video, 1990
- William Shakespeare: A Life of Drama*. A&E Television Networks, 1996

WEBSITES

- Absolute Shakespeare
www.absoluteshakespeare.com
- Aquila Theatre Company
www.aquilatheatre.com
- Folger Shakespeare Library
www.folger.edu/
- The Shakespeare Resource Center
www.bardweb.net
- William Shakespeare Biography (and more)
www.william-shakespeare.org.uk/index.htm

State TheatreNJ.org
Keynotes

JULIUS CAESAR

by William Shakespeare
Performed by the Aquila Theatre Company



The State Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey welcomes you to the school-day performance of Aquila Theatre Company in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, a play that follows the epic story of the rise and fall of one of the world's most notorious leaders. This is a full-length, fully-staged production. The entire performance runs approximately 2 hours, 20 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

These *Keynotes* provide information and activities that will help you follow and enjoy the show. We hope it will also help you find connections between what you see on the stage, the world today, and your own life.

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**AQUILA
THEATRE
COMPANY**

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Keynotes

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Wesley Brustad, *President*
Lian Farrer, *Vice President for Education*

Keynotes for Julius Caesar written and designed by Lian Farrer

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The State Theatre, a premier nonprofit venue for the performing arts and entertainment.



“If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.”

—Brutus

Set in Ancient Rome, in a world of political intrigue and strained relationships, Aquila Theatre’s production of *Julius Caesar* explores the moral and political dilemma of Marcus Brutus. Should he join the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar, conquering hero and his trusted friend? Or, should he allow Caesar’s tyrannical ambition to destroy the very ideals that Rome was founded upon? The choice that Brutus makes has the potential to destroy the old world order and to ignite a fierce civil war.

When Shakespeare first produced *Julius Caesar* at London’s Globe Theatre in 1599, the audience would have been astounded to see this most famous of historical figures live on stage. Elizabethan theater was a vibrant and bold new artistic form; Shakespeare combined existing English performance traditions with the incredibly fast advances in knowledge and culture that marked this exciting period of the Renaissance. Thomas North had just published a popular new translation of Plutarch’s *Lives of the Noble Greeks and*

Romans, an ancient biography written by a Greek during Roman times in the first century CE. Shakespeare borrowed heavily from Plutarch in creating his new play, *Julius Caesar*, a production in modern dress with Roman elements that reflected the turbulent times of the Elizabethan world.

Our intention is to unleash Shakespeare’s original objective and recreate it for a modern American audience. To this end we have sought to create design parallels between modern America and ancient Rome, from the classical symbols of government and power, to the Roman-like curved shields of contemporary riot police and the quasi-religious rich red robes of the senators. America in the early 21st century is not so unlike England in the early 17th; the questions *Julius Caesar* raises about politics versus morality, power and patriotism, manipulation and rhetoric, war and terror are all still incredibly relevant today.

—Peter Meineck

Artistic Director, Aquila Theatre Company

Julius Caesar & His Supporters

JULIUS CAESAR - Roman military hero who has defeated his political rival, Pompey, and set himself up as dictator for life of the Roman Republic

CALPURNIA - Caesar's wife

OCTAVIUS CAESAR - Julius Caesar's grandnephew and adopted son

MARK ANTONY - friend of Caesar

M. AEMILIUS LEPIDUS

} joint rulers of Rome after the death of Julius Caesar



Mark Antony

The Conspirators Against Caesar

MARCUS BRUTUS - A leading member of the Senate and respected friend of Caesar who fears that Caesar's grab for power is against the interests of the Roman Republic

CAIUS CASSIUS - A senator; the ringleader in the plot against Caesar. His tactical advice is repeatedly ignored by Brutus.

CINNA - The conspirator who recommends that they persuade Brutus to join their cause against Caesar

CASCA - A senator

TREBONIUS



Brutus

Their Family and Followers

PORTIA - Brutus' wife

LUCIUS - Brutus' servant

MESSALA

TITINIUS

} officers and friends of Brutus and Cassius

Other Romans

CICERO - a famous orator (public speaker) and Roman senator

FLAVIUS
MARULLUS } Roman tribunes (officials who protect the rights of the common people) who are critical of Caesar

SOOTHSAYER - a fortuneteller

CINNA THE POET - a poet who is not involved in the conspiracy

Missing PERSONS

If you've already read the play, you may notice some characters don't appear on the list on the left. Aquila decided to leave these characters out of their production.

Can you think of any reasons for cutting any roles? Why those particular characters?

As you watch the performance, try to decide whether cutting out some parts helps or hurts your understanding of the story.

Act One

Julius Caesar has returned to Rome after defeating the armies of his rival Pompey in battle. Some Roman senators fear that Caesar's growing power threatens the Roman Republic.

On his way to the celebrations of the feast of Lupercal, Caesar is warned by a soothsayer to "beware the ides of March." Cassius observes to Brutus that Caesar behaves as if he were a god. Returning from the festivities, Caesar voices his distrust of Cassius.

Casca reports to Cassius and Brutus that Mark Antony offered Caesar the crown, which he refused three times. Then Caesar had an epileptic fit. Cassius determines to use any dishonest means necessary to turn Brutus against Caesar.

The night brings violent storms, comets, and other strange phenomena. Casca, Cicero, and Cassius each interprets 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 good of the Republic. He reluctantly joins the assassination plot, but rejects Cassius' proposal that Mark Antony also be killed.

Brutus' wife, Portia, suspects that he has some terrible secret. To prove that she is tough enough to handle the truth, she shows him that she has wounded herself in the leg.

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, Casca, and Cinna, Caesar leaves for the Capitol.

Act Three

As Caesar makes his way to the Capitol, the soothsayer again warns him of the danger that surrounds him on this fateful day. While Cinna distracts Mark Antony, the other conspirators murder Caesar.

Mark Anthony 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 Mark Anthony to speak at Caesar's funeral.

At Caesar's funeral, Brutus speaks first. He convinces the crowd that Caesar was a tyrant who had to be killed to save the Republic. Facing a hostile audience, Mark Antony delivers a brilliant speech that ends up turning the people against the conspirators.

Brutus and Cassius have had to 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

Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus have formed a triumvirate to destroy Caesar's killers and gain control of the Roman Empire.

The conspirators and their armies have been on the run for months. At Brutus' camp in Sardis (in Asia), he and Cassius quarrel, then resolve their differences. Brutus reveals that Portia has committed suicide.

Word arrives that the triumvirs and their forces are approaching Philippi (in Greece). Once again Brutus overrules Cassius' strategic advice; he decides to take the battle to the enemy instead of waiting for the enemy to come to them.

Late at night in his tent, Brutus is visited by the ghost of Caesar. The ghost says that Brutus will see him again on the plains of Philippi.

Act Five

The leaders of the two armies meet at Philippi 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 Titinius has been captured, Cassius commits suicide.

Titinius and Messala bring word of victory to Cassius, but find him dead. Titinius 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 himself. The triumvirs discover his corpse. Mark Antony sadly proclaims Brutus to have been "the noblest Roman of them all."

Aquila Theatre Company had to solve a number of challenges in bringing Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* to life on stage. These are some of the factors they had to consider when designing their production, and the solutions they devised:

» **This is a touring production.** The company is performing *Julius Caesar* in repertory with Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* on a seven-month, 63-city tour. The production (sets, costumes, props) has to be flexible enough to fit on stages of different dimensions, and everything has to fit into a single truck—along with the sets, costumes, and props for *Catch-22*!

Solution: *Julius Caesar* uses a simple design: padded stools, a trunk, pieces of fabric, and semicylindrical steel props that are put to a variety of uses in the performance. These elements are moved into different configurations to create that the various locations in the story. Another important part of the set is a large screen, located upstage center. Various images are projected onto the screen to help create a sense of time and place.

» **There are eight actors in the ensemble.** Of course, there are many more characters in the play; even after Aquila cut some of the smaller parts, there are more than 20 different roles.

Solution: Most of the actors take on multiple roles. For example, one actor plays Brutus, Cicero, and Cinna the Poet. The two female cast members even play some of the male roles. The actors are challenged to create a distinctive personality for each of their roles so that the audience does not get confused about which part they are playing.

» **There are a lot of scene changes in the play.** There are 14 scenes in the five acts of *Julius Caesar*. Making all those scene changes could really slow down the action.

Solution: The set design helps make it easy to change scenes quickly and fluidly. Another transition device Aquila uses is music, which also helps create a sense of time, place, and emotional atmosphere.

» **Some audiences find Shakespeare hard to understand.** It can be challenging to connect with a story set in ancient Rome, especially when it's told in language that's so different from the way we speak today.

Solution: One of the reasons that *Julius Caesar* has lasted so long is that its story and characters are very similar to people and situations in our world today. Aquila Theater stresses this idea by juxtaposing classical-looking design elements with more modern elements and the use of projections and electronic music. Though all the words spoken in the performance are Shakespeare's, the style of the acting, the staging, and the production design all work together to make the story accessible to today's audiences.



Battle scene showing modern-looking uniforms and video-projected background

How Did

It GO ?

- During the performance, did you notice any lines or characters that were missing from Aquila's *Julius Caesar*? Do you think the cuts helped or hurt the play? Why? Did they change the meaning of the story? If so, how? What (if anything) would you tell them to put back?
- Did you notice the actors who played more than one role? How did they use their voices and bodies to create the different characters?
- How was color used in the production? What did the color choices tell you about the story and characters?

Gaius Julius Caesar came from a very old aristocratic family, and was a nephew to Marius, the Roman general and politician who lost the civil war to the dictator Sulla. When Caesar was still very young, Sulla sensed that he was ambitious and could threaten his absolute power. Caesar went into hiding to escape Sulla (who had ordered the deaths of hundreds of political rivals). He was captured by Sulla's guards, but escaped by bribing their captain. Shortly thereafter, he was kidnapped by pirates, and when his ransom was paid and he was freed, Caesar captured and crucified the pirates. He then began his illustrious military career.

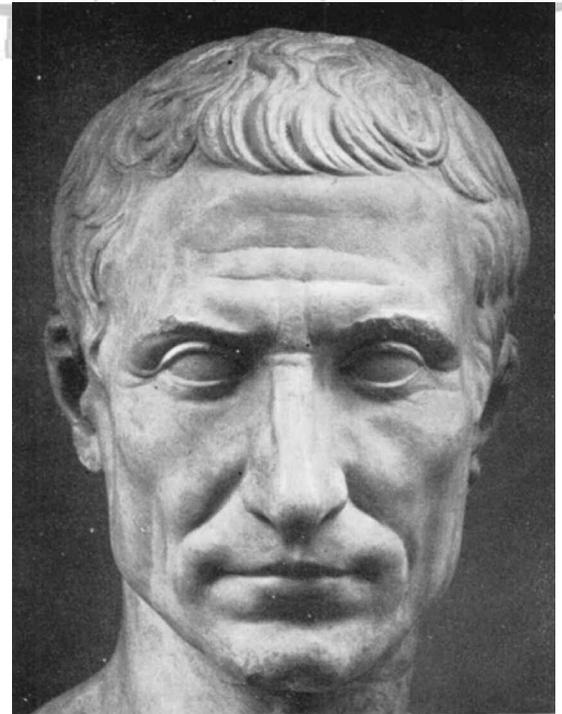
When Sulla died in 78 BCE, Caesar returned to Rome to begin his political career. He held many political offices while building an allegiance with the wealthy and powerful general, Marcus Licinius Crassus. Another popular general, Gnaeus Pompeius (Pompey) was gaining political power with the strong support of the senate. In 60 BCE Caesar engineered a three-way alliance to share power called the First Triumvirate. He was elected to the consulship, Rome's highest political office.

During his consulship, Caesar focused on the expansion the Roman Empire. He launched the Gallic Wars (58-49 BCE), conquering a region comprising present-day France, Belgium, western Switzerland, and parts of the Netherlands and Germany. His campaigns in Gaul brought enormous wealth to Rome. In addition, a reported one million people were killed and another million enslaved in pursuit of Caesar's objectives. Despite his successes and the benefits they brought to Rome, Caesar was unpopular among his peers, many of whom suspected him of wanting to become king.

In 53 BCE, Crassus was killed, creating a power struggle between Caesar and Pompey. Pompey and the senate ordered Caesar to disband his army and return from Gaul. Instead, Caesar chose to march on Rome with his army, and in 49 BCE, he crossed the Rubicon River, starting a civil war. Caesar easily defeated Pompey, but instead of following the precedent of having his opponents executed, he pardoned Pompey's followers. Pompey fled to Egypt, where he was murdered.

Back in Rome, Caesar began extensive reforms of Roman society and government, from expanding citizenship to overhauling the calendar. He was appointed dictator for a year starting in 49 BCE, for two years in 48 BCE, for 10 years in 46 BCE, and finally dictator for life in 44 BCE (with Marcus Antonius as his chief lieutenant). Caesar's apparent arrogance and ambition made him increasingly unpopular with his enemies. On the Ides (15th) of March, 44 BCE, a group of Senators calling themselves the "liberators" assassinated Caesar in the Senate. They justified the act by claiming they were saving the republic from a tyrant and would-be king.

Caesar chose his grandnephew, Gaius Octavius, as his heir. Octavius ultimately avenged his uncle's death and eventually became Augustus Caesar, Rome's first emperor.



Discovering CAESAR

While the historical Caesar is often seen as a powerful ruler, Shakespeare points out a number of his ailments and physical handicaps. What are they? Why would Shakespeare have portrayed Caesar as physically weak?

Can you name some other examples of popular leaders/rulers who were brought down by their overambition for power?

Working with a group of 6-8 people, create your own political-affairs talk show. The topic of this week's program is "Julius Caesar—Brilliant Leader or Power-Hungry Dictator?" Divide your group in half, with each side arguing for or against Julius Caesar. Use speeches from the play—both Caesar's own words and what others say to and about him—to support your position.

Have you ever wondered why so many famous quotations seem to come from Shakespeare? Language is the most important element in his plays and one of the main reasons they have endured for more than 400 years. When performed by skilled actors, Shakespeare's inventive words and poetic imagery—more than any other element of the production—bring his stories to life.

Though language is often what draws people to Shakespeare, it can also be the biggest obstacle to enjoying his plays. After all, nobody speaks "Elizabethan" anymore. But if you do a little homework and become familiar with the plot and characters, you should be able to follow the story even if you don't always understand what the characters are saying. The next step is to go back to the text and apply what you have learned about the play. Some parts may still be confusing, but others will become clearer, until eventually you should be able to understand all or most of it.

Say WHAT!?!

Making sense out of Elizabethan language is easy if you learn some basic vocabulary. Here is a list of words from *Julius Caesar* you should be familiar with before you see the show.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ACCOURED - equipped, outfitted | NAY - no |
| AN, AND - if | NE'ER (pronounced 'NAIR') - never |
| AUGHT - anything at all | PEEVISH - irritable; complaining |
| BECOME - look good on; suit | PRAY - beg |
| BESEECH - beg | PRICK'D - marked down; selected |
| BID - command, order | SOFT - wait a minute; hold on |
| BUT - only, except | SWOUND - to faint |
| DECREE - order | TEMPER - physical and/or mental condition |
| ERE (pronounced 'AIR') - before | THOU, THEE - you |
| GLASS - mirror | THITHER - there |
| HAPPY - fortunate; lucky | THRICE - three times |
| HART - an adult male deer | THY, THINE - your |
| HEAVY - sad, depressed | TIDINGS - news |
| HENCE - away from here | VEX - annoy |
| HIE - hurry, go | WHEREFORE - why |
| HITHER - here | WILT - will, will you |
| LIEF - gladly, willingly | WITHAL - in addition, besides; nevertheless |
| LIST - listen | WOE - misery |
| MARK - pay attention to | WONT (pronounced 'WANT') - accustomed, used to |
| MARRY - an exclamation of surprise | |
| MEET - suitable, proper, appropriate | |
| MORROW - morning; tomorrow | |

Did You KNOW...?

Shakespeare's plays were created to be performed, not read. The only reason he wrote them down at all was so the actors could learn their lines. Most of his plays were not published until after he died.

Dear DIARY

Put yourself in the shoes of a character from *Julius Caesar*. Explore the text for clues to what this character is like and what he or she is concerned about. Look at their words, their actions, and also what the other characters say about them.

As your character, write a journal entry depicting a day in your life as well as summarizing some of the events in the play from that character's perspective. Use at least 5 words from the vocabulary list on this page. While writing in your journal, think about:

- *Who are you? What do you look like? How do you act?*
- *How do you feel about the other characters? Who is your strongest ally? Who is your enemy?*
- *Were you involved directly with the action in a particular scene? If not, how did you hear about the events that transpired? What was your reaction?*

Before the SHOW

Discuss/Decide

Aquila Theatre Company believes that the central character in this play is Brutus, not Caesar. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Do you think the most important character in the play is someone other than Brutus or Caesar? Who?

Why do you think Shakespeare called the play *Julius Caesar*, when Caesar dies halfway through the story?

Is there a hero in this play? If so, who is it?

During the play, Caesar is called a “tyrant,” and Brutus is called “the noblest Roman of them all.” What evidence from the play supports these judgments? Does the reverse ever seem to be true? What is your opinion of these characters?



Cassius and Brutus

After the SHOW

How Was It?

Did the performance meet your expectations? Do you think it captured the spirit of the play? Was it successful as a piece of theater?

With your class, discuss all the elements of the performance: set, costume, and lighting design; music, acting, and directing. What worked for you? What didn't? What made you see the story and characters in a new way? What confused you?

Aquila says that in their view, the central theme of the play is Brutus' personal struggle between his friendship with Caesar and what he believes to be the best interest of the Roman Republic. Was this made clear in their staging? How?

Brutus argues that the killing of Caesar should be a solemn and noble sacrifice, not a brutal murder. Describe the assassination in this production. Was it ritualistic, or savage, or both? How did the way violence was handled affect your perception of the characters and of the world of ancient Rome?

Write a review of the performance and send it to the State Theatre: education@StateTheatreNJ.org. We'll be sure to share your reviews with Aquila Theatre Company!

During the SHOW

Look, Listen, Think About

What kind of place is “Rome” for this play and this director? What elements of Roman art and architecture are suggested by the scenery for this production?

Although the world of the production is inspired by ancient Rome, the costumes and sets also have some contemporary elements. Why do you think this choice was made? Which elements of the design feel more “ancient” and which feel more contemporary or timeless?

What kind of atmosphere does the music create? Does it match the mood of the costumes and sets? Does it seem appropriate to the world of this play?

What are some of the unusual or unexpected choices made by the director and/or the actors?

The Power of Words

One of the themes that appears frequently in *Julius Caesar* is the relationship between words and power. The ability to make things happen by speech alone is a powerful type of authority. Early in the play, it is established that Caesar has this type of absolute authority: “When Caesar says ‘Do this,’ it is performed,” says Antony (I.ii.10).

Words can also be used rhetorically: to persuade, to move hearts and minds. Two famous examples of rhetoric can be found in Act III of *Julius Caesar*. In the Forum, Brutus speaks to the crowd and appeals to their love of liberty to persuade them that Caesar’s assassination was a necessary evil. He also reminds them of his honorable reputation as further justification of the deed. Antony, however, is far more skilled in the art of rhetoric than Brutus. He is so good at using words to manipulate the feelings of the crowd that they completely change their minds about Caesar’s assassination in a matter of minutes.

RHETORIC - the art of persuasion through the skillful use of language. The Romans placed great value on public speaking (oratory) and rhetorical ability.



Caesar speaks; Cinna and Casca listen.

Signs of the Times

Julius Caesar is full of omens, portents, spirits, dreams, and prophesies. From the soothsayer who warns Caesar to “Beware the Ides of March” to Calpurnia’s dreams that foretell the assassination to Caesar’s ghost, the play is packed with references to the supernatural. “But men may construe things after their fashion/ Clean from the purpose of the things themselves,” remarks Cicero. In other words, people will interpret a dream or event in the way that best suits their purposes.

The supernatural elements in *Julius Caesar* would have resonated deeply with Shakespeare’s audience. In Elizabethan England, astrology, witchcraft, superstition, and a the supernatural were part of accepted scientific and medical beliefs. The Queen herself kept a royal astrologer (named John Dee) who was also a distinguished mathematician and doctor.

“The fault, dear Brutus,
is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that
we are underlings.”
—Cassius

Discuss and DO

In some ways, *Julius Caesar* seems to be a play about public relations and “spin.” How does the public’s perception of events in the play sometimes outweigh the events themselves? How do various characters try to manipulate these perceptions?

Working in a small group, imagine that you have been hired as the public-relations company for either Brutus and Cassius or Antony and Octavius. Create a negative ad campaign attacking their opponents. Create radio and/or television spots that advertise your clients’ point of view and exaggerate their opponents’ flaws. Write the script, rehearse it, and then perform your negative ads to the rest of the class. Whose ads were the most effective?

Identify as many examples as you find of events in *Julius Caesar* that are (or are perceived to be) omens. What does Shakespeare’s use of these omens suggest? What do the different reactions to the omens tell you about each of the characters? Look in particular at the interpretations of the storm by Casca, Cicero, and Cassius. Why does Shakespeare spend so much time on their conflicting interpretations of this event?