

JULIUS CAESAR

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

DIRECTOR PETER EVANS

SUCH MEN
ARE DANGEROUS



.SHAKESPEARE
LLEB

WE ARE BELL SHAKESPEARE

We ensure Shakespeare's work lives and breathes in theatres, schools and communities throughout Australia, where his words can be truly appreciated.

We value the beauty of Shakespeare's ideas, language and imagery. His work helps us find modern perspectives on timeless truths.

We believe Shakespeare and other great works are not stuck in the past. They are the lens through which we can explore and question the present and imagine the future.

These plays are not static. They're constantly helping us make sense of who we are, where we've been, and where we're going. And we're not static either. We've been travelling the country for more than 35 years, bringing classic theatre to Australia, looking for new ways to inspire, imagine and ignite.

Shakespeare and the other classic plays we present challenge our beliefs and urge us to see ourselves in a new light. Their ability to discover the things that make us human inspires us to make new work that challenges preconceptions and encourages new interpretations and contemporary parallels – work that speaks to every age.

FIRST NATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Bell Shakespeare acknowledges the First Peoples of the lands and waters on which we rehearse, perform and work across Australia. We recognise their continuous connection to Country, community and culture and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We honour the sharing of traditional stories; stories that have been passed down through generations.

WELCOME



On behalf of the board and staff of Bell Shakespeare, welcome to Season 2026! We start the year with Shakespeare's searing political thriller *Julius Caesar*, directed by our Artistic Director, Peter Evans.

Julius Caesar is set in a time far removed from our own. And yet, like all of Shakespeare's plays, it speaks urgently to the present day. It is a sharp examination of leadership and politics, but also of the power of words — to inspire, to incite, and to transform our world. Words, whether shouted in a crowd or whispered to a loved one, have incredible potency. This play is a timely reminder to choose them carefully.

Following *Julius Caesar*, don't miss the rest of our exciting 2026 season. We are proud to present the world premiere of *Mackenzie*, Yve Blake's hilarious and twisted take on the Scottish Play, in Sydney and Melbourne. Then, Peter's gripping production of *Macbeth*, starring Anthony Taufa and Matilda Ridgway, tours to more than 20 theatres across the country. And you'll love our lively program of talks and events throughout the year.

Of course, none of the important work we do in theatres, schools, communities and youth justice centres would be possible without the ongoing support of our government and corporate partners, individual donors, and trusts and foundations. We extend our sincere thanks to you all, and particularly acknowledge the Australian Government through Creative Australia and the Office for the Arts, the NSW Government through Create NSW, and our *Julius Caesar* Production Patrons, Dr Anne Reeckmann and Dr Gary Holmes, whose generosity inspires us every day.

Thank you for coming to *Julius Caesar*. It's my favourite Shakespeare play, and this production is stunning. Enjoy.

James Evans
Executive Director



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Theatre is an art form at its best when we can be conflicted. American writer and teacher George Saunders likes to quote Chekhov:

"A work of art doesn't have to solve a problem — it just has to formulate it correctly."

There is no greater exponent of this than Shakespeare.

Julius Caesar is a political thriller and a revenge drama, and in both cases, the engine is persuasion. Shakespeare and his audience would have known this story well; he would have read his source, Plutarch's *Lives* in Latin at school, and he had a recent English translation open on his desk as he was writing the play. Shakespeare takes events from the lead-up to the most famous murder in Western history and the civil war that follows. The timeline in history is over three years, yet Shakespeare creates a play that feels like four days. This is a technique he often uses to create dramatic tension, but it also forces the focus onto what really intrigues him, which is rhetoric. This is something Shakespeare knows suits his art form, and I draw your attention to how in scene after scene he explores persuasion in various forms, including storytelling, cajoling, flattery, teasing, arguing, inspiring, and of course, inciting.

Who would think Shakespeare could create such a gripping and tense play when the events are so well known before we begin?

Central to our production, and literally in the middle of the play, is violence. Shakespeare is fascinated by the consequences of violence, its inherent unruliness, and our inability to contain it. The conspirators wish for a surgical assassination:

*"Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers...
And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully,
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods."*

They wish to take out Caesar physically and therefore the spirit of his autocratic rule. The event is anything but surgical; rather, it is brutal, and chaos is unleashed.

The irony is the spirit of Caesar is released by his murder and hovers over the play and history thereafter, and autocracy prevails.

If we do our jobs, I hope you are conflicted. Shakespeare is a political philosopher who creates a thought experiment from history, and his genius is to be able to lay out the events deliberately and clearly, yet we find no easy answers.

The theatre is a place where we can hold opposing ideas in our heads at the same time. We can appreciate the nobleness of Brutus and her thoughtfulness while lamenting her naïve assumption of these qualities in others. I hope we feel some pity, even if we wish her honourable nature did not cloud reality.

We can be appalled by Antony's willingness to incite chaos while understanding his shock and grief at the death of his friend, and his single-minded determination. His willingness to risk it all is thrilling.

But the central question Brutus debates in soliloquy proves elusive: can one commit murder and retain any moral standing? Is there any such thing as an honourable assassination?

Peter Evans
Director

COMPANY LIST

CAST

Cassius Leon Ford
Portia Jules Billington
Casca (Sydney and Canberra) Peter Carroll
Julius Caesar Septimus Caton
Metellus Ray Chong Nee
Decius James Lugton
Calphurnia Ava Madon
Cinna Ruby Maishman
Casca (Melbourne) Gareth Reeves
Mark Antony Mark Leonard Winter
Brutus Brigid Zengeni
Understudy Olivia Ayoub
Understudy Oliver Crawford

CREATIVES

Director & Set Designer Peter Evans
Associate Director Jessica Tovey
Costume Designer Simone Romaniuk
Lighting Designer Amelia Lever-Davidson
Composer & Sound Designer Madeleine Picard
Fight and Movement Director Tim Dashwood
Voice Director Jack Starkey-Gill
Draftsperson Dallas Winspear
Intimacy Coordinator Caroline Kaspar
Associate Dramaturg Jeremi Campese

CREW

Production Manager Benjamin Howlett
Stage Manager Grace Guppy
Rehearsal Stage Manager Kirsty Mangelsdorf
Assistant Stage Manager Milly Grindrod
Dresser Ally Mansell
Head Electrician Sam Wylie
Head Mechanist Jay Jones
Head of Vision Charles Kember
Head of Audio Todd Hawken
Head of Costume Sara Kolijn
Costume Assistant/Buyer Katie Fitchett
Costume Cutter Valerie Adele
Costume Cutter Fiona Warmbath
Costume Secondment Naomi Hanley
Costume Art Finishing Angela Doherty
Stage Management Secondment Lola Hunt
Set built by Thomas Creative
Lighting supplied by Chameleon Touring Systems
Freight supplied by John Kline AAA Touring

ART

Title Design Chris Doyle & Co
Campaign Photography Pierre Toussaint
Rehearsal Photography Brett Boardman



SYNOPSIS

Caesar has returned to Rome, triumphant after a war with the sons of Pompey. During the celebrations, a soothsayer warns Caesar to beware the Ides of March (15th of the month). Brutus, Caesar's friend and ally, fears that the Roman Republic will be destroyed if Caesar is crowned King.

Cassius and others convince Brutus to join a conspiracy to kill Caesar. Sensing Brutus' unease, her wife, Portia, pleads with her to share what is going on, but Brutus shuts her out. On the day of the planned assassination, Caesar's wife, Calphurnia, urges him to stay at home, but one of the conspirators, Decius, persuades him to go to the Senate where the conspirators stab Caesar to death.

Caesar's loyal friend Mark Antony asks to speak at Caesar's funeral and uses this opportunity to turn the citizens of Rome against the conspirators. A violent mob is unleashed on the streets of Rome, and Brutus and Cassius escape.

Antony joins forces with Octavius Caesar and declares war on Brutus and Cassius, who argue bitterly with each other. Brutus reveals to Cassius that Portia has died by suicide.

Finally, they agree to march on the armies of Antony and Octavius. During the battle, Cassius, misled by erroneous reports of a loss, persuades his servant to kill him. Brutus dies by suicide after her army is defeated, and Antony praises Brutus as 'the noblest Roman of them all'.

Julius Caesar
 By William Shakespeare
 Director Peter Evans

7 March – 5 April
 Sydney Opera House

10 – 18 April
 Canberra Theatre Centre

23 April – 10 May
 Arts Centre Melbourne

This production began previews on 7 March 2026 and opened on 11 March 2026 at the Sydney Opera House.



SPECIAL

PRODUCTION PATRONS

Dr Anne Reeckmann
& Dr Gary Holmes

SUPPORTING SYNDICATE

Nicholas Andreou
Katherine A Brazenor
Philip & Sarah Chronican
Philip Crutchfield KC & Amy Crutchfield
Shannon Finch & Brad Noakes
David & Deborah Friedländer
Natalie Hickey & Christopher Fox
Sue Houghton
Anne Loveridge AM
Daniel McInerney KC & Dee McInerney
David Pumphrey OAM & Jill Pumphrey
Garry Rich SC & Shiva Rich

THANKS

FOR WHO SO FIRM THAT CANNOT BE SEDUCED?

By Andy McLean

We live in a time of soundbites, social grabs and short attention spans, but political leaders still know that speeches win hearts and minds. In fact, the art of rhetoric in public speaking could be more powerful today than it was in Julius Caesar's time.

Today you could have stayed at home on the couch, glued to Netflix or TikTok (or both). But instead you chose to come to this theatre. Why?

For many of us, part of the answer has something to do with the buzz of live performance. Watching a screen, it's hard to recreate the special energy that crackles in a roomful of actors and audience members. And that's how science explains it too.

A study by University College London found theatregoers' heart rates changed approximately twice as much as those watching film. It appears that human hearts start to synchronise in theatre audiences, and we feed off each other's responses to the actors on stage.

Educational neuroscientist Dr Jared Cooney Horvath says the hormone oxytocin, which is the foundation of empathy and trust, is more easily activated in person than via digital media. According to his research, people's brain activity harmonises when they are together in the same place, "a process known as 'neural coupling' that leads them to not only learn from one another but quite literally think alike."

RHETORICALLY SPEAKING

The science makes sense given that humans evolved for millennia by communicating in person, not through screens. And it helps explain why public speeches can still cut through the digital din of Insta Reels and YouTube Shorts.

In Munich last year, a scorched-earth speech by US Vice President JD Vance left his audience of European allies both admonished and astonished. Then at Davos in January, Canadian PM Mark Carney presented a counter view that sent shockwaves through a room full of international leaders.

Those two speeches were totally at odds politically, but they were part of the same long tradition of rhetorical study. Philosophy professor Angela Hobbs points out that the art of speaking persuasively has been admired at least as far back as Homer, who likely lived in the 8th Century BCE.

Later, the use of rhetoric triggered moral panic in Plato, who argued it was dishonest and "it must not, if we can help it, strike root in our society." But his hopes were in vain.

By the time the Romans rose to power, the discipline of public persuasion was much admired, according to English professor Ceri Sullivan. "[In Rome] the political aspect of rhetoric is seen not as an abuse by the clever or the weak or stupid... but a way of negotiating, a way of understanding that your audience must be with you when you're attempting to govern them."

FIGURES OF SPEECH

Centuries later, when William Shakespeare wrote *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, he was already well versed in the tools of rhetoric. They had been part of his school curriculum. And his play is littered with language designed to sway crowds, secure consent, and reshape people's understanding of reality.

The assassination of Caesar in the Senate may be the point of no return for Shakespeare's conspirators, but it's the following two public speeches at his funeral which seal the fates of everyone in Rome.

First comes Brutus, who is confident the Roman masses can be persuaded that Caesar had to die. Like Brigid Zengeni in today's Bell Shakespeare production, actor Harriet Walter played the role of Brutus as female in 2012. Walter says Brutus' speech employs an array of technical devices including repetition, emotional appeals and rhetorical questions to position herself as a patriot — not a murderer.

She points out that Brutus' speech builds from logical argument to emotional blackmail, culminating in a call for unity. And it's packed with antithetical soundbites that capture her key messages:

"Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more"

"Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men?"

Technically speaking, Brutus delivers a fine speech and initially the crowd is convinced. But Brutus has made a fatal error. Literally. Having earlier spared the life of Caesar's right-hand man Mark Antony, she now departs and grants him the chance to deliver a eulogy.

Antony's speech swiftly moves the crowd from acceptance of Brutus' explanation to furious rebellion. From the first line onwards, it's an absolute masterclass in rhetoric. Writer and critic Sam Leith points out that "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears" appeals first to friendship, then to civic duty as Romans, and finally to a communal sense of countrymen. It's one

of the oldest tricks in the book — in the 4th century BCE, Aristotle identified this tactic as "ethos".

Antony goes on to display a variety of linguistic acrobatics, while denying that he knows what he is doing:

*"I am no orator, as Brutus is;
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man
That love my friend."*

This is disingenuous on Antony's part — he's a sensational orator — but the crowd swallows it hook, line and sinker. In those three lines, he reinforces his relationship with the common folk and distances Brutus from them.

As well as establishing his own connection with the audience, Antony connects them to Caesar and his legacy, too. He uses what speechwriters call "concrete language" to paint a picture in the audience's minds of the "private arbours and new-planted orchards" Caesar has bequeathed to the public. And Antony uses a tactic that Aristotle identified as "pathos" to stir the audience's emotions:

"My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar"

Antony also shows a knack for stagecraft. He's disobeyed an earlier instruction from Brutus to "Prepare the body" of Caesar and instead kept it in the gory state the conspirators left it in. Now, during his oration, Antony reveals Caesar's wounds to the audience — and he names names — vividly describing the bloody damage inflicted by Casca, Cassius and Brutus.

As well as ethos and pathos, Aristotle would also recognise Antony's use of "logos" to persuade the crowd. Sam Leith explains: "Logos is the argument itself — the evidence weighed, the conclusions drawn, and the thumbs on the scales," which can be seen in Antony's shrewd attempt to square the evidence he presents in his speech with the axiom that the conspirators are "all honourable Romans".

STATE OF FEAR

Antony's rhetorical prowess is all the more remarkable when you consider the emotional turmoil he's been thrust into. Brutus knew the assassination was coming and had some time to prepare his speech. But Antony is in a state of shock. After witnessing his friend's traumatic

death, he's now confronting a new reality where Caesar is not "constant as the north star", but gone forever.

In many ways, Antony's raw emotional state mirrors that of his fellow Romans. Neuroscience might suggest his heart has synchronised with theirs. A more political interpretation is offered by US national security analyst Ben Rhodes:

"If you look at both Lincoln and Kennedy after they were killed, people felt like we didn't appreciate them enough while they were here. That's one emotion. Another emotion is somehow, 'We did this. If the great man was killed, something must be wrong with us, and we must therefore strive to be like the greatness inside of the person we lost.' And that's exactly what Mark Antony's message was."

Shakespeare goes to great lengths to show us just how extraordinary Caesar's fall is. A series of prophecies and uncanny events precede the assassination, from soothsayer warnings to fire raining from the sky. Chaos is already in the air

before the conspirators strike, so it's no wonder the Roman people feel vulnerable when Caesar dies. During his eulogy, Antony shares their fear and understands their need for certainty, steering them towards a solution: mutiny.

MANY AGES HENCE

From ancient Rome to Elizabethan England to modern-day Australia, rhetoric remains a potent force in political life. Perhaps now more than ever, when people consume so much fractured digital chatter.

"[Nowadays] when a speech does break through, it's almost more important," says Rhodes. "The desire for an audience to want someone to give meaning to an event that they don't understand is still with us. When big events happen, when there's a large political event, there is still that desire for somebody to explain it."

Andy McLean is a freelance writer, podcaster and presenter based in Sydney. swashandbuckle.com.au



CREATIVE TEAM

PETER EVANS DIRECTOR & SET DESIGNER



Peter Evans is Bell Shakespeare's Artistic Director. For Bell Shakespeare, Peter has directed *Romeo & Juliet*, *Coriolanus*, *In A Nutshell: The Poetry of Violence*, *King Lear*,

Romeo and Juliet, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Miser*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Richard 3*, *Othello*, *As You Like It*, *The Dream*, *Tartuffe*, *Phèdre*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Intimate Letters* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. As Associate Director for Melbourne Theatre Company, Peter directed *Clybourne Park*, *A Behanding in Spokane*, *Life Without Me*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *The Ugly One*, *The Grenade*, *God of Carnage*, *Savage River*, *Realism*, *The Hypocrite*, *Blackbird*, *Don Juan In Soho*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The History Boys*, *Don's Party*, *The Give And Take*, *Dumbshow* and *The Daylight Athiest*. Other theatre credits include *Pygmalion*, *The Great*, *Fat Pig* and *The Give And Take* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Hamlet*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *King Lear*, *Copenhagen*, *Proof*, *Muldoon* and *The Christian Brothers* for New Zealand's Court Theatre; *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *A Poor Student* for Malthouse Theatre; and *Jesus Hopped The A Train* for Red Stitch Actors Theatre.



JESSICA TOVEY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



For Bell Shakespeare, Jessica Tovey has appeared in *In A Nutshell: The Poetry of Violence*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Miser* and *Macbeth*. Jessica's other stage credits include

Truck Stop for Q Theatre; *Double Indemnity* for Melbourne Theatre Company; and *Constellations*, *Twelfth Night* and *Antigone* for Queensland Theatre. Her screen credits include *Paper Giants: The Birth of Cleo*, *Wonderland*, *Underbelly: Golden Mile*, *Home and Away*, *Wolf Creek*, *Panic at L.A.C.*, *Mr and Mrs Murder*, *Hamish and Andy's True Story*, *Bad Mothers*, *Adoration*, *Tracks*, *Lemon Tree Passage* and *Beast No More*.

SIMONE ROMANIUK COSTUME DESIGNER



Simone Romaniuk is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (Bachelor of Dramatic Art in Design) and the Queensland College of Art (Bachelor of Design in Three Dimensional Design). As Set and Costume Designer, Simone's credits include *A Few Good Men*, *The Almighty Sometimes*, *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Elizabeth*, *Almost by Chance a Woman*, *Venus in Fur*, *Bombshells*, *Kelly*, *Head Full of Love*, *Fractions*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *Australia Day*, *The Pitch*, *The China Incident*, *Beckett x 3* and *Ruby Moon* for Queensland Theatre Company; *Tiny Beautiful Things* for Queensland Theatre Company and Belvoir St Theatre; *True West*, *How to Plot a Hit in Two Days*, *The Lover & The Dumbwaiter*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Clyde's*, *Honour*, *Kenny*, *The Last Wife*, *Luna Gale*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Frankenstein* and *Casanova* for Ensemble Theatre; *The Crucible* and *Seneca's Thyestes* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Macbeth* and *The Wizard of Oz* for Brisbane Festival; and *Bananaland* for Brisbane Festival and Sydney Festival. As Set and Costume Designer in Opera, her credits include *Eucalyptus* for Victorian

Opera; *Rinaldo* for Pinchgut Opera; *La bohème*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Love Burns* and *Boojum!* for State Opera South Australia; and *The Mikado*, *The Merry Widow*, *Space Encounters* and *The Magic Flute* for Opera Queensland. Simone has held positions as Creative Director of Adelaide Festival Centre's OzAsia Festival and Moon Lantern Parade, Festival Designer for Brisbane Festival, and as Resident Designer for Queensland Theatre Company. Simone's awards include Matilda Awards (Best Design) for *Macbeth* and *Kelly*, Matilda Gold Awards (Outstanding Body of Work — Design) 2012 and 2014, and a South Australian Tourism Award (Best Major Festival) for OzAsia Festival 2019.

CREATIVE TEAM

Opera; *Rinaldo* for Pinchgut Opera; *La bohème*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Love Burns* and *Boojum!* for State Opera South Australia; and *The Mikado*, *The Merry Widow*, *Space Encounters* and *The Magic Flute* for Opera Queensland. Simone has held positions as Creative Director of Adelaide Festival Centre's OzAsia Festival and Moon Lantern Parade, Festival Designer for Brisbane Festival, and as Resident Designer for Queensland Theatre Company. Simone's awards include Matilda Awards (Best Design) for *Macbeth* and *Kelly*, Matilda Gold Awards (Outstanding Body of Work — Design) 2012 and 2014, and a South Australian Tourism Award (Best Major Festival) for OzAsia Festival 2019.

AMELIA LEVER-DAVIDSON LIGHTING DESIGNER

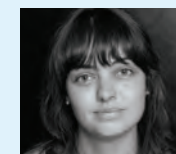


Amelia Lever-Davidson is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and the Royal Melbourne Institute of

Technology. For Bell Shakespeare, Amelia has worked on *Coriolanus*. As Lighting Designer, Amelia's credits include *The Seagull* and *Julius Caesar* for Sydney Theatre Company; *The Almighty Sometimes*, *Meet Me at Dawn*, *Bloom*, *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, *Girls & Boys*, *Slap. Bang. Kiss*, *Admissions*, *Torch the Place* and *The Violent Outburst That Drew Me To You* for Melbourne Theatre Company; *The Wrong Gods*, *Blessed Union*, *My Brilliant Career* and *Every Brilliant Thing* for Belvoir St Theatre; *They Divided The Sky* for Belvoir 25A; *Macbeth (an undoing)*, *Hour of the Wolf*, *Because The Night*, *K-BOX*, *Australian Realness* and *Trustees for Malthouse Theatre*; *Gilgamesh* for Sydney Chamber Orchestra; *The Children's Bach* for Lyric Opera of Melbourne; *Leviathan* for Circa; *Myself in that Moment*, *System_Error* and *Diaspora* for Chamber Made; *Next Move 11* for Chunky Move; *Moral Panic*, *Contest*, *Niche*, *Conviction* and *Dream Home* for Darebin Speakeasy; *Hand to God* for Vass Productions; *The Hall*, *Where Is Joy?*, *Looking Glass* and *Triumph* for fortyfivedownstairs; *Your Name*

Means Dream, *Monument*, *A Simple Act of Kindness*, *Desert*, 6:29PM, *Jurassica* and *Foxfinder* for Red Stitch Actors Theatre; *Plagiarism* for Now or Never; *MKA's Double Feature* for MTC NEON; and *Ground Control*, *Camel* and *Hello There We've Been Waiting For You* for Next Wave Festival. Amelia's awards include Green Room Awards (Best Lighting Design) for *Diaspora*, *Contest* and *Looking Glass*.

MADELEINE PICARD COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER



Madeleine Picard (she/her) is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (Bachelor of Fine Arts in Technical Theatre and Stage Management). As

Composer and Sound Designer, Madeleine's credits include *Dial M for Murder* and *Emerald City* for Ensemble Theatre; *Life is a Dream*, *Hot Tub* and *Shitty* for Belvoir 25A; *Amber* and *All the Fraudulent Horse Girls* for The Old Fitz Theatre; *Scab* for the Australian Theatre for Young People; and *The Weekend* for Belvoir St Theatre. As Associate Sound Designer/Realiser, her credits include *The Talented Mr Ripley* and *Julia* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Whitefella Yella Tree* for Griffin Theatre Company; *The Wrong Gods* and *Song of First Desire* for Belvoir St Theatre; and *Ride the Cyclone* for Hayes Theatre Co. Madeleine's awards include a Sydney Theatre Award (Best Sound Design/Composition of an Independent Production) for *Shitty*.

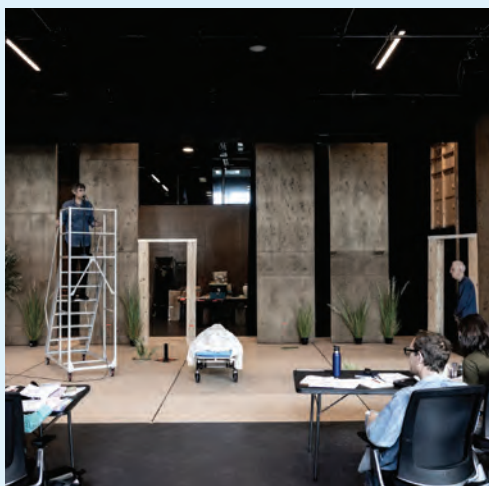


CREATIVE TEAM

TIM DASHWOOD FIGHT & MOVEMENT DIRECTOR



Tim Dashwood (he/him) has studied extensively in a range of martial and movement practices under the mentorship of Nigel Poulton. **For Bell Shakespeare**, Tim understudied for *Richard III* and *Othello*, and has worked with The Players. **As Fight Director**, Tim's credits include *The Shiralee*, *The Talented Mr Ripley*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Sweat and Stolen* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Carmen*, *Hamlet*, *West Side Story* and *Miss Saigon* for Opera Australia; *Primary Trust*, *Ulster American* and *Alone It Stands* for Ensemble Theatre; *The Pirates of Penzance* or *The Slave of Duty*, *Zombie! The Musical* and *Dubbo Championship Wrestling* for Hayes Theatre Co; and *Nucleus*, *The Lewis Trilogy* and *Jailbaby* for Griffin Theatre Company. Tim teaches at Sydney Actors School, Actors Centre Australia and the National Institute of Dramatic Art, and leads workshops for the Society of Australian Fight Directors incorporated.



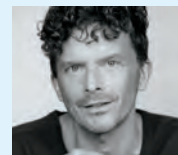
JACK STARKEY-GILL VOICE DIRECTOR



Jack Starkey-Gill (he/him) is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts (Bachelor of Dramatic Art in Acting) and the National Institute of Dramatic Art (Master of Fine Arts in Voice). **For Bell Shakespeare**, Jack has worked on *Romeo & Juliet*, *Coriolanus*, *Henry 5*, *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet* and The Players, and has appeared in *Macbeth* for young audiences and The Players. **As Voice/Dialect Coach**, Jack has worked on *Constellations* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Mary Poppins* for Michael Cassel Group; *An Ambivalent Woman of 37* for Vivid But Not Garish; *Sandaime Richard*, *Kindness*, *Festen* and *Macbeth* for the National Institute of Dramatic Art; and *The Libertine* for Actors Centre Australia. **As Director**, his credits include *Dogg's Hamlet* and *The Cagebirds* for Sydney Actors School. His **stage** credits include *Macbeth* for young audiences for Bell Shakespeare; *ARIA* for Ensemble Theatre; *The 52-Storey Treehouse* for CDP Theatre Producers; *Infinity Taster* for The Old Fitz Theatre; *Property of the Clan* for Don't Look Away Theatre; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Winterfall Theatre. Jack's **screen** credits include *Neighbours* for Grundy Television Australia; and *Marley*, *Someone Door* for Ildiko Susany. Jack has lectured for the National Institute of Dramatic Art, Sydney Actors School and Actors Centre Australia, is the founding director of JSG Voice, and is an Associate member of Professional Speakers Australia.

CAST

LEON FORD CASSIUS



For Bell Shakespeare, Leon Ford (he/him) has appeared in *Tartuffe*, *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry V* and *Henry IV*. His **stage** credits include *A Little Night Music* for Hayes

Theatre Co; *Enemy of the People*, *The Rover* and *Old Man* for Belvoir St Theatre; *A Flea in her Ear* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Double Indemnity*, *Private Lives* and *Constellations* for Melbourne Theatre Company; and *Old Man* for Belvoir St Theatre. Leon's **screen** credits include *Dog Park*, *ANZAC Girls*, *The Letdown*, *Mabo* and *Stepfather of the Bride* for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation; *The Last Anniversary* for BINGE; *Ten Pound Poms* for the British Broadcasting Corporation and Stan; *Sunny Nights* for Stan; *God's Favourite Idiot* for Netflix; *Elvis* for Warner Bros; *Rams* for WBMC; *Light Between Oceans* for DreamWorks Pictures; *Gallipoli* for Nine Network Australia; *Devil's Playground* for Foxtel; *Puberty Blues* for Network Ten; *Beneath Hill 60* for Paramount Pictures; *The Pacific* for HBO; and *Tsunami: The Aftermath* for the British Broadcasting Corporation. **As Director and Writer**, he has worked on *Griff the Invisible* for Green Park Pictures. **As Writer**, Leon's credits include *Love Me* for Binge; *Upright* for Foxtel; *Offspring* for Network Ten; *Dog Park* for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation; and *The Portable Door* for Jim Henson Co. Leon also wrote the novel *What Doesn't Kill You*.

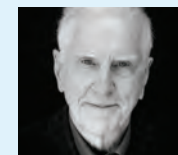
JULES BILLINGTON PORTIA



Jules Billington (they/them) is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art. **For Bell Shakespeare**, Jules has appeared in *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *Romeo and Juliet*, directed The Players, and was Associate Director for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Their **stage** credits include *TWIN*, *Embers* and *Gallipoli* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Baghdad Wedding* for Belvoir St Theatre; *The Myth Project* for Melbourne

Theatre Company; *Jump for Jordan* for Darlinghurst Theatre Company; *COWBOIS* and *The Past is a Wild Party* for Siren Theatre Company; and *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* for La Boite Theatre. Jules' **screen** credits include *STRIFE* and *Bali 2002* for Stan; *Pieces of Her* for Netflix; *Janet King* for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation; *Catching Milat* and *Home and Away* for Shine Productions; *East West 101* for the Special Broadcasting Service; and *Tricky Business* and *In Your Dreams* for Southern Star. **As Director**, their credits include *The Swell* for Akimbo + Co and The Old Fitz Theatre; *EVOL* for Sydney Actors School; and *People Will Think You Don't Love Me* for Little Trojan. Their **awards** include a Greenroom Grounding Award (Best Performance in an Independent Production) for *My Name Is Rachel Corrie*. Jules is an Associate Artist with Chopt Logic and teaches movement at the Actors Centre Australia.

PETER CARROLL CASCA (SYDNEY AND CANBERRA)



Peter Carroll is a distinguished artist with a career spanning over 100 productions and 50 years. **For Bell Shakespeare**, Peter has appeared in *Coriolanus*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *King Lear*. Peter's **stage** credits include *The Player Kings* for Sport for Jove Theatre; *Little Women* for Hayes Theatre Co; *The Dismissal* for Squabballagic; *Girl from the North Country* for GWB Entertainment; *Into the Woods* and *King Lear* for Belvoir St Theatre; and *The Tempest* and *Do Not Go Gentle* for Sydney Theatre Company. His **screen** credits include *Playing Gracie Darling*, *Aftertaste*, *Heartbreak High*, *Melba*, *Five Mile Creek*, *Bump*, *The Letdown*, *Bloom*, *Rake*, *The Power of the Dog*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* and *Crazy Rich Asians*. Peter's **awards** include Green Room Awards, Sydney Theatre Critics' Circle Awards, a Helpmann Award, an Honorary Doctorate of Creative Arts and the Media Arts & Entertainment Alliance's Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2021, Peter was awarded Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to theatre.

CAST

SEPTIMUS CATON JULIUS CAESAR



Septimus Caton is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art. **For Bell Shakespeare**, Septimus has appeared in *Coriolanus* and *The Comedy of Errors*. Septimus'

stage credits include *Romeo and Juliet* and *Twelfth Night* for Sport for Jove Theatre; and *This Much is True*, *This Blasted Earth: A Christmas Miracle* and *Degenerate Art* for The Old Fitz Theatre. His **screen** credits include *Prosper*, *Home and Away*, *CyberGirl*, *Underbelly Files: Chopper*, *Rake 2*, *Wild Boys*, *My Place 2*, *Laid*, *All Saints*, *Happy Feet 2*, *LBF*, *Wolverine*, *Ned*, *Peter Pan*, *Life Can Be A Dream* and *The Netball Diaries*. Septimus is also the series narrator on *My Kitchen Rules* for Seven Network.

RAY CHONG NEE METELLUS



For Bell Shakespeare, Ray Chong Nee has appeared in *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Othello* and *Actors At Work*. Ray's **stage** credits include *I Call My*

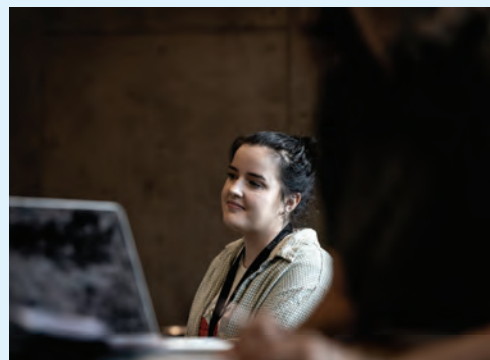
Brothers for Melbourne Theatre Company; *Emerald City* and *Noises Off* for Queensland Theatre Company and Melbourne Theatre Company; *The Tempest* for Sport for Jove Theatre; *Hydra* for Queensland Theatre and State Theatre Company South Australia; *How to Rule the World* for Sydney Theatre Company; *The Motion of Light in Water* for Elbow Room, La Boite Theatre, HotHouse Theatre and Theatre Works; *Bare Witness* for Performing Lines; *Angels in America* for TheatreINQ and Riverside Theatres; and *Andy X* for the National Institute of Dramatic Art. Ray's **screen** credits include *Swimming for Gold*, *There's a Bluebird in My Heart*, *Amalia Lucia Gomez is Gluten Intolerant*, *The Bench*, *Savage Garden*, *The Pool*, *Home and Away*, *Pulse*, *Tomorrow When The War Began*, *Glitch*, *Party Tricks*, *Offspring*, *Rescue Special Ops* and *Dance Academy*. Ray's **awards** include Green Room Award nominations

(Outstanding Performance in a Featured Role and Best Independent Male Performer), a Green Room Award (Best Ensemble), and a Melbourne Fringe Award (Best Performance).

JAMES LUGTON DECIUS

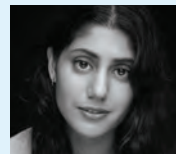


For Bell Shakespeare, James Lugton has appeared in *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar* and *Othello*. James' **stage** credits include *Born on a Thursday* and *Snowflake* for The Old Fitz Theatre; *True West*, *The Great Divide*, *A Doll's House*, *Diplomacy* and *The Odd Couple* for Ensemble Theatre; *Unholy Ghosts* for Griffin Theatre Company; *The Hollow Crown*, *Wars of the Roses*, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Hamlet*, *Edward II*, *The Crucible*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *As You Like It* for Sport for Jove Theatre; and *The Young Tycoons* and *Miss Julie* for Darlinghurst Theatre Company. His **screen** credits include *Playing Gracie Darling*, *The Twelve*, *The Unusual Suspects*, *Harrow*, *Diary of an Uber Driver*, *Rake*, *Doctor Doctor*, *Fighting Season*, *Mary: The Making of a Princess*, *Home and Away*, *Wonderland*, *Packed to the Rafters*, *Paper Giants — The Birth of Cleo*, *BMX Bandits*, *Hacksaw Ridge* and Joe Cinque's *Consolation*.



CAST

AVA MADON CALPHURNIA



Ava Madon is a graduate of the Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore. **For Bell Shakespeare**, Ava has appeared in *Henry 5*. Ava's **stage** credits include *Ride the*

Cyclone, *The Lucky Country* and *Merrily We Roll Along* for Hayes Theatre Co; *Not Now, Not Ever: A Parliament of Women* for Belvoir 25A; *I Hate People/ Timon of Athens*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Macbeth* and *Othello* for Sport for Jove Theatre; *If/Then* and *Bells are Ringing for Neglected Musicals*; *Titanic: In Concert* for The Marrollo Project; and *Into the Woods* for Belvoir St Theatre and Watch This. Her **screen** credits include *Mikki vs. the World*, *Definitely Not News*, *The Packdown*, *Stacked!*, *Ava's Kitchen* and *Junior Eurovision* for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation; and *Code of Law* for Weiyu Films. Ava's **awards** include a Sydney Theatre Award nomination (Best Ensemble) for *The Lucky Country* and Green Room Award nominations for *Into the Woods* and *Henry 5*.

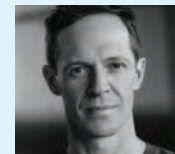
RUBY MAISHMAN CINNA



Ruby Maishman is a graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. **For Bell Shakespeare**, Ruby has understudied for *Coriolanus* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and has

appeared in *The Players*. Ruby's **stage** credits include *Present Laughter*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Seagull* and *Birdland* for the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts; *Antigonick* for the National Institute of Dramatic Art; *Dead Skin* and *People Will Think You Don't Love Me* for Kings Cross Theatre; and *The Last Train to Madeline* for Fever103 Theatre. Her **screen** credits include *Home and Away* for Seven Network; *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* for Amazon Studios; and *Colin from Accounts* for Easy Tiger Productions. Ruby's **awards** include a WA Screen Academy Award (Best Female Actor) for *Hy_Brain*.

GARETH REEVES CASCA (MELBOURNE)



Gareth Reeves is a graduate of Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School. **For Bell Shakespeare**, Gareth has appeared in *Coriolanus*, *Richard III* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Gareth's **stage** credits include *Venus In Fur* for Darlinghurst Theatre Company; *Middletown* for Red Stitch Actors Theatre; *Straight White Men* for Melbourne Theatre Company; *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.* for Malthouse Theatre; *Elegy* for Lab Kelpie; and *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* for Michael Cassel Group. His **screen** credits include *Underbelly: A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Cult*, *Go Girls*, *I'm not Harry Jenson*, *Existence*, *Tracker*, *Pete's Dragon*, *Mary: The Making of a Princess*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Wentworth*, *Frontiersmen* and *Murder is Forever*. Gareth's **awards** include a New Zealand Screen Award (Best Actor) for *The Insiders Guide to Love* and a New Zealand Screen Award nomination for *A Song of Good*.

MARK LEONARD WINTER MARK ANTONY



For Bell Shakespeare, this is Mark Leonard Winter's debut. Mark's **stage** credits include *Troy*, *Thyestes*, *Avast* and *Avast 2* for Malthouse Theatre; *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Miss*

Julie and *Birdland* for Melbourne Theatre Company; *Three Sisters*, *Chimerica*, *King Lear*, *Suddenly Last Summer* and *The Effect* for Sydney Theatre Company; and *The Master & Margarita* for Belvoir St Theatre. His **screen** credits include *The Family Next Door*, *Fires* and *The Newsreader* for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation; and *Balibo*, *Van Diemen's Land*, *Hearing*, *Escape from Pretoria*, *Top of the Lake* and *The Dressmaker*. Mark's **awards** include an Australian Directors Guild Award (Best Direction) for *The Rooster*, two Helpmann Awards and the 2017 Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship.

CAST

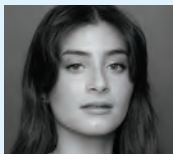
BRIGID ZENGENI BRUTUS



Brigid Zengeni is a graduate of the Drama Centre London. For **Bell Shakespeare**, Brigid has appeared in *Coriolanus*. Brigid's **stage** credits include *The Seagull*, *Do Not Go Gentle*,

Death of a Salesman and *Blythe Spirit* for Sydney Theatre Company; *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Belvoir St Theatre; *The Welkin*, *I'm Not Running*, *Twelfth Night* and *A Winter's Tale* for the National Theatre; *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Julius Caesar* for the Royal Shakespeare Company; and *Romeo & Juliet*, *Yerma*, *Three Sisters*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Volpone*, *Pandora*, *The Hyperchondriac*, *Pericles*, *Macbeth*, *Dr Faustus*, *Oliver Twist* and *Taming of the Shrew* for the Southern Shakespeare Festival. Her **screen** credits include *Better Man*, *Monolith*, *The Good Liar*, *U Want Me 2 Kill Him?*, *The Hardest Part*, *The Cry*, *Zombucha!*, *He Had It Coming*, *Motherfatherhood*, *Love Me*, *The Secrets She Keeps*, *The Messenger*, *Bump*, *Trying*, *Fortitude*, *House of Anubis*, *Sherlock*, *Holby City*, *In Defence*, *The Bill*, *People Just Do Nothing*, *Totally Completely Fine*, *The Artful Dodger*, *Prosper*, *Missing You* and *The Twelve*.

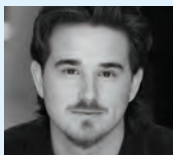
OLIVIA AYOUB UNDERSTUDY



Olivia Ayoub is a graduate of the Queensland Academy of Excellence in Musical Theatre (Bachelor of Musical Theatre). For **Bell Shakespeare**, Olivia has appeared in *The Players*.

Olivia's **stage** credits include *Heathers* and *Cry-Baby* for the Queensland Academy of Excellence in Musical Theatre. Olivia has also performed in the quartet for the *Lord Mayor's Christmas Carols* for The Little Red Company.

OLIVER CRAWFORD UNDERSTUDY

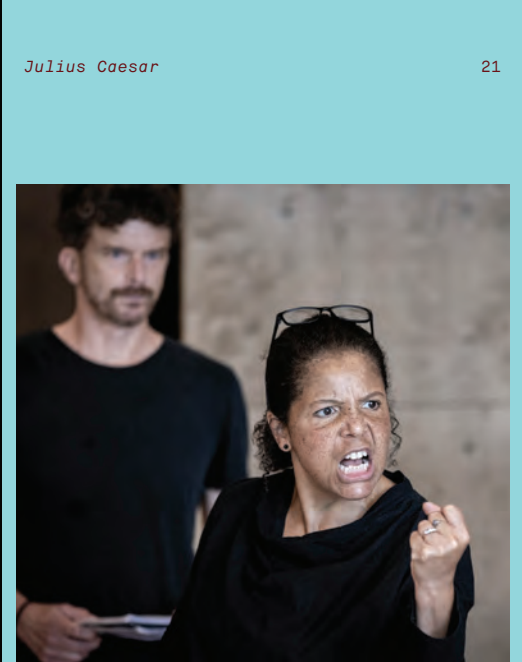
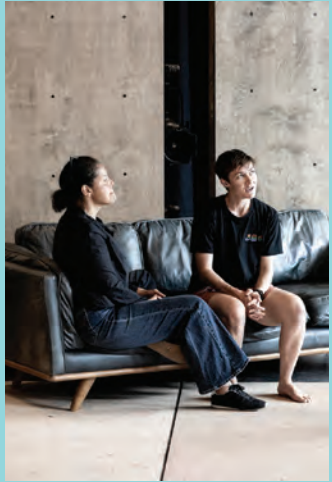


Oliver Crawford (he/him) is a John Bell Scholarship recipient and graduate of the Actors Centre Australia. For **Bell Shakespeare**, Oliver has appeared in *The Players*.

Oliver's **stage** credits include *The Seagull*, *The Libertine*, *The Laramie Project*, *Toy Symphony* and *Twelfth Night* for Actors Centre Australia.



IN THE REHEARSAL ROOM



THE REST WAS HISTORY

Shakespeare's central source for *Julius Caesar* was Plutarch's *Lives*. However, as always, he never let the facts stand in the way of a good story.

As in most of his histories, Shakespeare telescopes time. Historically, Caesar's triumph was in October of 45BCE and the Feast of Lupercal on 15th February the following year, however Shakespeare makes these events simultaneous. The assassination of Caesar was a month later historically, but in this play it seems only days later. The Forum scene (Act 3, Scene 2) includes, in one sequence, action that in fact took place in several different places over a period of six weeks, and historically there were nine months between Brutus and Cassius meeting at Sardis and the battle at Philippi. Shakespeare compresses this time gap. Shakespeare also increases the number of wounds on Caesar from 23 to 33 — perhaps a reference that echoes the death-age of Christ.

The 'pulpit' where both Antony and Brutus go to speak is anachronistic — corresponding to an Elizabethan, not a Roman, place of public address. Other anachronisms in the play include a striking clock, a book with 'the leaf turned down', and costuming anomalies such as nightcaps and doublets. Shakespeare's era was a time of fascination with what could be learned from

antiquity, rather than how accurately history could be reported.

Every question about leadership and tyranny in *Julius Caesar* is in fact a question directed at Shakespeare's own society. For example, the link between Elizabeth and Julius Caesar is clear — a temporal ruler claiming divine rights. In the latter years of her rule, Elizabeth was known in almost mythological terms such as 'Gloriana' (Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queen), and fastidiously controlled the production and dissemination of her image. Caesar was similarly linked to mythology — called the father of Oberon (King of the Fairies) and linked to legendary exploits such as the building of the Tower of London.

Shakespeare's bending of history was not a new concept. Plutarch, in his introduction to the life of Alexander the Great in *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, reminds the reader: "My intent is not to write histories, but only lives... Oftentimes a light occasion, a word, or some sport makes men's natural dispositions and manners appear more plain than the famous battles won, wherein are slain ten thousand men, or the great armies or cities won by siege or assault."

Excerpt from *Julius Caesar Historical Background*, available via Bell Shakespeare's digital Shakespeare Hub.



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Thank you to our 2026 Artistic Director's Circle who are passionate about the process of making theatre and are supporting and observing the 2026 mainstage and education seasons.

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Thank you to our 2026 Stranger Companies members. The circle directly supports our Hearts In A Row program which provides disadvantaged schools and communities access to one of our productions at no cost.

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We are incredibly grateful for our annual donors who contribute essential funds, via Supporting Cast and Sharing Shakespeare, to the cost of our core operations. This ensures we are able to focus our efforts on finding new ways to create, collaborate and educate on the mainstage and beyond, including life-changing opportunities provided through our learning and outreach programs nationwide.

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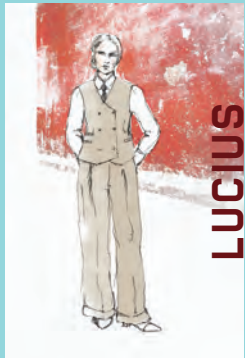
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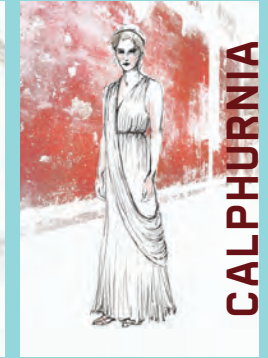


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