

DONMARR®

JULIUS CAESAR

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**behind^{the}
scenes**

Written by Hannah Price

Edited by Sam Maynard

Photography by Helen Maybanks

Contents

	Introduction	3
Section 1	Background to JULIUS CAESAR	4
	A brief biography of William Shakespeare	5
	JULIUS CAESAR: A synopsis	7
	JULIUS CAESAR: Historical Context	9
	The Roman hatred of kings	9
	The rise of Julius Caesar	9
	Rome, the Republic and Citizenship	11
Section 2	The Donmar's production	12
	Cast and Creative team	13
	Rehearsal Diary	15
	A conversation with Phyllida Lloyd, Director	21
	A conversation with Harriet Walter, playing Brutus	24
Section 3	Resources	28
	Spotlight: Kate Waters, Fight Director	29
	Exercises	33
	Bibliography and suggestions for further reading	36
	About the Donmar Warehouse	37

Introduction

Welcome to this Behind the Scenes guide to the Donmar Warehouse production of William Shakespeare's JULIUS CAESAR. In the following pages, you will find a wealth of information to give you a closer look at the process of bringing this production from page to stage, including interviews with director Phyllida Lloyd and actor Harriet Walter, rehearsal diaries, contextual information about the production, and practical resources for use by teachers and students.

This guide has been designed to accompany the Donmar's production of Shakespeare's play, and so the information included below refers specifically to this production. Where relevant, we have included information about the historical context of the play, but this guide does not attempt to provide an overview of the vast amount that has been written about Shakespeare's JULIUS CAESAR, instead concentrating on the choices made for this production.

We hope that you find this guide interesting and informative. To view the Behind the Scenes guides for other productions, please visit www.donmarwarehouse.com/discover/resources.

Hannah Price

Assistant Director

Sam Maynard

Education Officer

*Phyllida Lloyd, Hannah Price,
Ann Yee and the company of
JULIUS CAESAR*



Section 1:

Background to JULIUS CAESAR



A brief biography of William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon and died there in 1616. His reputation rests on his work as a poet and playwright, but he was also an actor and an astute businessman. His work in the professional theatre seems to have begun in the early 1590s (his first known play is probably *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*) and by 1595 he had made the association with the Chamberlain's Men (subsequently the King's Men) that was to last until his retirement.

Julius Caesar was written in 1599. In the same period, Shakespeare also wrote *King John* and *The Merchant of Venice*, and a group of romantic comedies: *Much Ado about Nothing* (probably 1598), *As You Like It* (1599-1600) and *Twelfth Night*. The last of these appears to have been written after *Hamlet*, generally thought to date from around 1600. During the first years of the 17th century Shakespeare produced four other tragic dramas: *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*



Harriet Walter, Jade Anouka, Jenny Jules and Carolina Valdés

and *Antony and Cleopatra*. There is no circumstantial evidence to indicate that the dramatist – whose private life remains tantalisingly private – underwent some emotional crisis during this period, but critics have continued to be intrigued by the fact that in the same years he also wrote plays that were barely comedies but not clearly tragedies: *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well*.

In his last active years Shakespeare seems to have favoured stories with a freer, more romantic range of incidents and characters, though in all of them the principal characters have to overcome serious threats to their happiness and lives. His last known dramatic work seems to have been the collaboration with John Fletcher on *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *All Is True* (also known as *King Henry VIII*), both performed in 1613. *Mr William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories & Tragedies*, the collected edition of his plays edited by his fellow actors John Heminges and Henry Condell, appeared in 1623, some seven years after the playwright's death.

For a longer biography of Shakespeare, please refer to the Donmar's guides for our productions of [RICHARD II](#) and [KING LEAR](#).

Ishia Bennison and
Jenny Jules



JULIUS CAESAR: A synopsis

Julius Caesar has returned to Rome, triumphant from military victory. As he parades through the streets, a **soothsayer** stops him, and tells him to beware the Ides of March (March 15th). Caesar ignores him and continues on his way.

Meanwhile, amongst Rome's most powerful citizens, there is growing concern about Caesar's ever increasing power. As citizens of a democratic republic, the idea that Caesar might become king is terrifying. Caesar is already putting to death anyone who pulls down his images, or protests against him. So much power in the hands of one man could be dangerous, and many in the Senate wish to avoid this at all costs.

Gaius Cassius is among those who fear Caesar's ambition. He plots against Caesar, gathering a group of conspirators around him, bent on assassination. He persuades **Marcus Brutus**, a popular and well-respected citizen, as well as a close colleague of Caesar's, to join the conspiracy, despite his initial misgivings. Brutus, seen by the public as a moral and ethical man, is key to winning public support after the murder. As they discuss the murder at Brutus' house, Brutus persuades the conspirators to only murder Julius Caesar, and not **Mark Antony**, Caesar's close friend and ally, to stop the political coup seeming more bloody than it needs to be.

On the Ides of March, a mighty storm blows up around Rome, and Caesar's superstition is aroused. After receiving bad news from a priest who has sacrificed an animal in order to read its entrails, and hearing of a terrible dream that his wife **Calpurnia** has had, Caesar resolves to stay at home. **Casca**, another of the conspirators, arrives and persuades him to attend the Senate, as they are planning to give Caesar the crown. On his arrival at the Senate, he is stabbed to death by Cassius and the rest of the conspirators. Seeing Brutus is among his murderers, Caesar dies knowing the full extent of his betrayal.

Jenny Jules





Having committed the murder, Brutus is convinced he can persuade Rome that the actions of the conspirators were a noble sacrifice, and not a bloody murder. As part of Caesar's funeral he goes to the marketplace to explain his actions to the Roman people. In a rousing speech, he convinces the Roman citizens of the justice of his actions, and leaves with their full support.

Brutus has made one crucial mistake. He allows Mark Antony, Caesar's old friend, to speak after him, as long as Mark Antony doesn't speak against the conspirators. Mark Antony's speech is even more electrifying than Brutus's. By a stroke of manipulative genius he brings the crowd onto his side, without uttering a word against Brutus or the conspirators. By the time he has finished, he has swept the crowd into a deluge of fury against the conspirators who killed their beloved Caesar. The people of Rome riot in the streets, forcing the conspirators to flee.

Mark Antony joins forces with **Octavius**, Caesar's nephew, to take command of Rome and lead an army against the conspirators. Meanwhile, Cassius and Brutus, having fled Rome, are now struggling to maintain their alliance – Brutus is outraged by Cassius' corruption, while Cassius in turn accuses Brutus of disloyalty. Brutus' wife, in despair for her husband and his fate, kills herself by swallowing hot coals. On hearing that Antony and Octavius have put 100 Senators to death in Rome, the conspirators prepare themselves for battle. After Caesar visits Brutus in a dream, Brutus knows that the battle ground of Phillipi will be the place he meets his fate, for better or worse.

The battle of Phillipi commences on Cassius' birthday. His troops are overwhelmed by Antony's forces, and flee back the way they came. Cassius kills a deserter who was carrying his battalion's flags. If the flag drops, then the battle is over. Cassius sends his general to check if some troops they can see are friend or enemy, and sends his slave, **Pindarus** to the top of a hill to get a better view of the action and report what happens. Pindarus sees the general surrounded. Believing his generals all captured Cassius enlists Pindarus to help him kill himself. Pindarus and Cassius have misread the situation - in fact Brutus has pushed Octavius' troops back. Brutus discovers Cassius and vows to find time to mourn him properly, but now he must face another battle. This time Brutus is overwhelmed and kills himself with the help of a faithful servant. While Octavius and Antony rejoice in the defeat of the conspirators, they commend Brutus as having killed Caesar not out of envy, but from a desire to do the right thing.

JULIUS CAESAR: Historical Context

The Roman hatred of kings

*'What means this shouting? I do fear the people
Choose Caesar for their king'*

(Brutus, Act 1.2)

Early Rome was ruled by kings, the first being Romulus, the legendary founder of the city, who ruled from around 753 BC. Successive kings ruled the city until around 509BC, when the downfall of kings was, according to legend, brought about by the Rape of Lucrece. Rome's kings had become increasingly corrupt, and the rape of Lucretia, a noblewoman, by the king's son Sextus, and Lucretia's subsequent suicide caused outrage among the Roman nobility, and precipitated a conspiracy which killed Sextus and ousted the king, Tarquinus Superbus, from the throne. The conspiracy was led by Lucius Junius Brutus, an ancestor of Marcus Brutus, who was later to conspire against Julius Caesar.

Following this, the office of king was prohibited in the city, and Rome became a republic, ruled by a Senate of city elders and by two consuls who were elected annually. The law allowed for a dictator to take over control of Rome in times of crisis, but this dictator was supposed to step aside after 6 months. There was a widespread hatred of the idea of kings within Rome, and any attempts by individuals to gain excessive power for themselves were fiercely resisted by the population.

The rise of Julius Caesar

*'He doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus'*

(Cassius, talking about Caesar, Act 1.2)

By the time Gaius Julius Caesar rose to prominence, 450 years after the deposition of Rome's last king, the foundations of the Roman republic were becoming shaky. Rome's sphere of influence was huge, and stretched across the Mediterranean into Africa and the Middle East. Closer to home, however, wars within Italy had led to the rise of a dictator, Sulla, who marched on Rome and seized power for himself. Sulla's brutal three year reign upset the delicate balance of the Roman republic, and went completely against its founding principles. His retirement ushered in a new age, in which the Roman Empire was ruled by the First Triumvirate, an alliance of three generals – Pompey, Crassus, and Julius Caesar, each of whom had their own base of power.

The First Triumvirate was a powerful alliance. During this period, Rome extended its territories, notably in Gaul, where Julius Caesar led a nine year campaign, ending in the defeat of the Gaulish chieftain Vercingetorix. However, tensions between the leaders eventually bubbled to the surface, and on the death of Crassus after a disastrous campaign in the Middle East, the

rivalry between Pompey and Caesar became increasingly bitter. Both had control of huge and loyal armies - fights between the supporters of the two men broke out on the streets of Rome, and the city increasingly moved towards anarchy. With Caesar away fighting in Gaul, Pompey was appointed dictator of the city for five years. Attempting to consolidate his power, he called for Caesar to return to Rome and give up his armies.

Caesar, however, was not to be trifled with. Instead of giving himself up, he ordered his army to march on Rome. Caesar's invasion of Italy began with his army's crossing of the Rubicon river, symbolically declaring war on the Roman republic.

Caesar's battle-hardened troops entered Rome itself in barely two months, forcing Pompey and his supporters to flee to Greece. Rather than exacting revenge on those who had opposed him, however, Caesar took care to ensure that his troops did not loot the city, and even put in place gestures of goodwill to win the hearts and minds of the citizens. He even absorbed soldiers formerly loyal to Pompey into his own army.

Caesar proved effective at both administrating the empire, and on cracking down on opposition. He pursued Pompey to Greece, eventually defeating him at Pharsalus, despite being outnumbered almost two to one by Pompey's army. Pompey himself fled to Egypt, but was murdered by the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy XIII, who presented his head to Caesar on a plate. Disgusted by this, Caesar had Ptolemy deposed and placed his sister, Cleopatra, on the throne.

Shakespeare's play begins on the return of Caesar to Rome following the final defeat of Pompey. His power within Rome seemed insurmountable.

Helen Cripps



Rome, the Republic and Citizenship

*'Age, thou art shamed!
When could they say, till now, that talked of Rome,
That her wide walks encompassed but one man?'*

(Cassius, Act 1.2)

By the year 44BC, the year of Caesar's death, the Roman Republic was over 400 years old. The current American republic is over a hundred years younger. This comparison is useful in several ways. Robert Harris, author of *Pompeii*, *Imperium* and *Lustrum*, highlighted the similarities between the two in his visit to the Donmar rehearsal room; enormous land-masses, made up of many member states, governed from a central office of highly regarded leaders called the Senate, changing enormously in the face of a mass influx of money as their economic fortunes blossomed. Both rely heavily on rhetoric and oratory to win over the people, with the US debate system taking more and more prevalence in American politics, and the Roman ideal of 'rhetoric' exemplified by the most famous speaker of all time, Cicero. Both have strong and established histories of democracy. Rome's democracy may have been more flawed (no votes for slaves or women), but it was just as much a part, if not more, of the very fabric of society. A long, moralistic and ethical belief in the Republic is key to understanding *Julius Caesar*. What would happen now, if someone tried to establish an absolute monarchy in America? What would happen if someone tried to become King of the USA?

For the conspirators the idea that Caesar is to become king is anathema. These men were very highly regarded, high achievers in Roman society. All had military backgrounds, with Brutus particularly highly regarded as a military leader. They had all held high office in Roman society and were respected men of Rome. As a citizen of Rome, these men felt a responsibility to the principals and ideals of a free state. Caesar slowly and surely eroded the freedoms they held as tenets of the Republic. Free speech, freedom to travel, and the vote were all abolished. Caesar flooded the city with informers and subjected citizens to random searches. He also started on what appeared to be a path to deification. When Cassius asks 'and this man is now become a god?' he doesn't ask it lightly. Caesar had gifted himself golden thrones, a golden chariot, put his own image in religious processions, created temples dedicated to himself, created a priest as head of the cult of Caesar and even renamed the seventh month after himself; 'July'. The kingship was the last straw. If Caesar became king, not only would the Republic be dead, but the succession of Caesar's offspring secured. For these men, living in a society that had overthrown its kings more than 400 years before, this was incredible and unthinkable.

For Brutus and the conspirators, Caesar's encroachment on human rights was akin to being imprisoned. Their world, as the travel ban was put in place, literally shrunk. Rome became dangerous, treacherous, secretive, restrictive. They knew worse was to come. When Brutus says that 'what he is, augmented, would run to these and these extremities' he can see clearly that as bad as it is now, a Caesar with more power would mean more and more abuses, more and more loss of civil liberties. For the proud men of Rome, the conspirators, Caesar's death meant freedom. By killing Caesar, they believed they could escape the prison that Rome had become.

Section 2:

The Donmar's production



Harriet Walter and Clare Dunne

Cast and Creative team

Cast (in alphabetical order):



Calpurnia / Metellus
Cimber / Pindarus

JADE ANOUKA



Portia / Octavius
Caesar

CLARE DUNNE



Dardanius/ Guitar

IRENE KETIKIDI



Caesar

**FRANCES
BARBER**



Trebonius

JEN JOSEPH



Soothsayer

CARRIE ROCK



Prison Guard

ALICE BELL



Lucius

**CHARLOTTE
JOSEPHINE**



Cinna / Volumnius

**CAROLINA
VALDÉS**



Casca

ISHIA BENNISON



Cassius

JENNY JULES



Brutus

HARRIET WALTER



Cinna the Poet /
Drums

HELEN CRIPPS



Mark Antony

CUSH JUMBO



Lepidus / Clitus /
Bass

DANIELLE WARD

Production

Director

PHYLLIDA LLOYD

Designer

BUNNY CHRISTIE

Lighting Designer

NEIL AUSTIN

Sound Designer

TOM GIBBONS

Composer

GARY YERSON

Movement Director

ANN YEE

Casting Director

ANNE McNULTY

For full biographies of the cast and creative team, please click [here](#)

Entering the rehearsal room for JULIUS CAESAR at the Donmar Warehouse is a thrilling experience – even on the first day of rehearsals, the room is abuzz with noise and chatter, and there is a palpable sense of excitement at the prospect of tackling this extraordinary play.

This sense of anticipation is further heightened by the fact that this production will be anything but traditional. Director Phyllida Lloyd and Casting Director Anne McNulty have assembled an amazing all-female company to play all the roles in Shakespeare’s play. Not only does the assembled company include leading Shakespearean actresses Harriet Walter and Frances Barber, playing Brutus and Caesar respectively, but an electrifying lead guitarist, a drummer, a boxer, a stand up comedian, a movement specialist, and two actresses recruited through Clean Break, a theatre company working with female offenders.

Phyllida Lloyd and Designer Bunny Christie have also created a compelling vision for their version of Shakespeare’s play. The world of the play has been relocated to a women’s prison; Bunny has transformed the Donmar’s auditorium into a grey, oppressive, industrial space; even the audience’s normally cushioned seats have been replaced with hard plastic chairs. The play has also been significantly cut to create a version of the text which can run without an interval, and which emphasises the themes that Phyllida wants to explore. As rehearsals progress, the text will continue to evolve and develop as the company make new choices and discoveries.

Frances Barber and Irene Ketikidi



Jenny Jules



Harriet Walter with Jen Joseph



Cush Jumbo and Jade Anouka



Hannah Price's Rehearsal Diary

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

PRODUCTION

RESOURCES



Frances Barber and Carrie Rock

WEEK
ONE

Julius Caesar is a play about power, and the loss of power; it is about fear and suspicion, a creeping lack of trust, regime change, political belief, fighting for freedom, honour and a way of life. It's about envy, ambition and murder. It's about men, fighting for what they believe in, or what they want. It's about men committing violence for a greater good. It is about men in power.

But is it male? The play disparages 'womanish' fears and behaviours. Women are disregarded and not listened to. Women in the play resort to violence against the self to gain power, not violence against others. They wish themselves 'manly' to have strength.

But what is female power, and what is male power? How much of power is defined by the world we live in? If Caesar, lord of all the world, decides your fears are unimportant, then are they unimportant? If all about you give you no power, then do you have none, save over yourself? If power is defined by one person, then does it cease to be gendered, as all are emasculated by the infinite power of one?

What about violence? What about intrigue? What about manipulation? Are women, notably the sex still under-represented in almost all areas of political life, less able to access the play, or more? Are all of these elements, most brilliantly rendered by Shakespeare into the mouths of men, less powerful in the mouths of women? Or more?

In a room with a cast of 15 extraordinary women, these

At the end of week one, we are brim full of ideas. The rehearsal room is an inspirational space. Each cast member has shared much of herself, both through the exercises on fear and power, and through her approach to the text.

questions are pondered. The week has seen us discuss power, and play it, discuss fear and play it, discuss regime change and start to play it. We have been both working through the play to find the sense and working into the themes that flow from it.

We have also had some brilliant visitors. Ann Yee has been in all week, working with the cast to start accessing their energy with strength. She has been with us as we work on our exercises on fear and power, helping us to understand how they act on the body. Barbara Houseman has been approaching the technical aspects of accessing Shakespearean text as well as helping the cast discard

any worries they might have about playing it. Combat Kate has started the cast's journey towards committing believable acts of violence on stage.

On Wednesday, Robert Harris, the author of the best-selling books *Fatherland*, *Enigma*, *Archangel*, *Pompeii* and *Imperium*, expert on Rome and ex-Political Editor of the Observer, came to speak to the cast. Robert brilliantly compared Rome to the modern USA, and helped to create a context for the political intrigue and drama that we see on stage. The Republic and all it stood for was 400 years old: older than the American republic is now. Imagine if Obama abolished the vote, stopped Senators travelling, banned free speech and flooded the country with spies, while declaring himself King. The analogy is not as far-fetched as we might imagine.

At the end of week one, we are brim full of ideas. The rehearsal room is an inspirational space. Each cast member has shared much of herself, both through the exercises on fear and power, and through her approach to the text. The room is wholly supportive, with the more senior actresses as happy to start from the ground up as those who have little to no experience of Shakespeare. Each cast member passes their expertise on, and generosity rules. The room feels like a safe place, non-judgmental, equitable and free.

This has been an extraordinary week.

WEEK TWO

Week two starts in a new space. For one day only we are in the cavernous surrounds of a BBC studio. Romanesque in size, the space lends something epic to proceedings. The events, indeed, are epic. On the first day of the new week, Fight Director Combat Kate visits us again and we start to consider violence. What does it feel like to witness violence? What does it feel like to perpetrate it? Is it controllable? What is the effect of a woman committing an act of violence versus a man?

Jenny Jules



We start to work through basic safety moves, giving and receiving as a pair, how to remain in control and appear to be out of it. This work allows us to identify our points of violence within the play and what we want to do with them. How do we want to show the mob violence in the death of Cinna? How do we want to show one of the most famous deaths in history? One of the most famous deaths in drama? How would we, as women, want to portray that?

We continue the work on the text. The work around the table is yielding to improvisation. Improvisation is used in two ways. The first is as research - especially for the larger set pieces of action, such as the beginning and the end. Throwing in different elements to each improvisation ups the ante in each re-run.

Movement Director Ann Yee is on hand to help us focus and redirect energy. Caesar's Triumph, for example, is improvised with the cast behaving as bodyguards- what does that show us? It is improvised again with the sense that Caesar is likely to kill anyone who steps out of line. How does that work? What do we discover? What elements can we keep, and what should we change? It is improvised again with the idea that Caesar has been listening already to soothsayers and signs; he is already superstitious. How does this change it? What should we keep from each time we run? What builds on what, and remains, like a lyrical ghost? The room is open, honest and supportive. Anyone can chuck in an idea, suggest an amendment, ask for a new exploration to take place.

Improvisation is also used to directly inform scenes and how they are played. This week we have been starting to split scenes into units, and then 'actioning' each line in the play ['actioning' is a method developed by Max Stafford Clark, a former Artistic Director of the Royal Court, and Artistic Director of Out of Joint. For an example of how this is applied to a particular speech, see the annotated text on page 35.

In 'actioning', speeches are divided into small units (as small as a single sentence). Each line is then matched with a transitive verb. An example of a transitive verb would be 'needles', 'coaxes', 'presses'. In deciding on the 'action' word, the first question is, 'what am I trying to do to the character my line is aimed at?'. Individual 'actions' are always small and specific. The 'action' would never be 'to marry them' or 'to get them to leave town'. It's based on the idea that a character plays to 'affect' the other person or people in the scene.

So, we work through the play, 'actioning'. When Caesar says 'Et tu, Brute?' is he trying to punish Brutus? Shock him? Shame him? Belittle him? The improvisations around the text help to provide context and build a complex world on which the play is based. If we improvise the moment in which Brutus is told that Portia has died, we can link back to that moment as we 'action'. When Brutus says 'Portia is dead' to Cassius, we can make a stronger assertion for what his 'action' might be, because we know exactly how he took this news, and what underlines the passing on of the news to his friend.

In this way the play is both on its feet and round the table, rooted in specifics and in the imagination. It's a play of contradiction and query, and week two has seen many of these questions settled, and ever more probing questions asked.

WEEK THREE

Week three has seen us continue our work on the text, and develop our improvisation work. We split the days between close study of the text, improvisation and movement work. Evening rehearsals tend to be with smaller groups; close work supplemented with imaginative exercises designed to close the gaps between the characters and the actors, to take away the sense of an 'us' and a 'them'.

We augment our rehearsals with research: from the sublime (Plutarch's 'Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes') to the ridiculous ('The Dummies Guide to Rome' - completely invaluable as a quick reference source). We use books to lend us modern ideas and equivalents: photoessays of modern Caesars, images and news items that touch on recent regime change, DVDs of propaganda machines at work. The cast suggest new books each day, new references, new documentaries. We are lucky to have Zoe Roberts (PA to the Executives) supporting us, helping us to source what we need.

Personal experience is important too. Individuals bring ideas, experiences and stories. Phyllida is open to suggestion, harvesting the imaginative power of the group. By combining the creativeness of the group dynamic with a strong focus on text, and our work on actions, we are building layers with an added dimension of complexity.

Barbara Houseman is continuing to add technical detail and expertise to the reading of the text. Ann Yee is continually in rehearsals to work with us on movement, accessing power, and the physical dynamism of the cast. Gary Yershon is working up a storm with the band:

loud, brash and sexy, the band are a thing to behold.

Kate

Gary Yershon is working up a storm with the band: loud, brash and sexy, the band are a thing to behold.

Waters (Combat Kate), our fight director, is also in with us again. For the first time we work on the death of Caesar: the build up to the violence, the reasons behind it, the personal and political grievances and lastly, the actual death itself. We are keen to create a death that reflects the cast, their strengths and weaknesses, and where we are setting the action. The violence

is shocking, and even more so in female hands. On stage women are usually the victims of violence, not the perpetrators. The cast have to access their strength in new ways, create solid foundations from which to inflict pain. The impact of seeing this cannot be underestimated: shocking, raw physicality of an extreme variety.

Saturday's rehearsal closes the week with further exploration of the motivations of the conspirators. We improv first meetings. We build on the backstory of each character. We work through individual grievances at Caesar and link them to our setting. We work on imbuing the text with every resonance.

The week has seen us achieve an extraordinary amount. We are moving into underlining the text with fine detail and supporting our previous work with further exploration and improv. Next week will continue this work and see us take on a shape and a structure.



Harriet Walter and Frances Barber

WEEK FOUR

In the week that the world waited with baited breath the outcome of possible regime change in the world's biggest democracy, we felt the tremors in our little world. As America voted we continued to build our story; a story in which many of the most pre-eminent minds of the age quaked at what a new leader might bring.

The production, if you haven't already guessed, is set in a prison. For the conspirators, Caesar represented an erosion of fundamental civil rights so huge, so towering, terrifying and confining that the conspirators believed they were in a prison. A prison in which they were unable to travel, unable to challenge the leader or express themselves, a prison in which freedom of speech did not exist, a prison in which all the tenets of the free and civilized republic they believed in and fought for, were gone.

For us, the prison setting serves several useful practical purposes, as well as artistic ones. By confining the play in one space in this way, the pressures, the

strains and the burden of what the conspirators face is enlarged and pulled into focus. These men lived under a microscope, constantly observed, constantly monitored for signs of disloyalty. They spent every waking hour wondering what liberty, what element of their 400 year old democracy would be pulled down next. The prison neatly creates this feeling of being observed and spied upon. The prison setting also neatly sidesteps the question of whether in our version, we are men or women. There are no men in the prison. The play is going being performed. Our cast are playing the characters.

Much of this week has been spent joining our two realities. We approach the staging simply: how

would we approach this scene if we were in a prison? Which themes would we most want to highlight? Which props would we be allowed in a prison? How would we show that?

We also work on establishing what our 'reality' is. Each cast member has created and explored who they are in the prison. They have adopted prison names, and know the back history of their characters. The cast have also established what the relationships are between them all- and worked out why, as women in prison, they may have been cast as or chosen to play their characters. What is it about Harriet Walter's prisoner that lends herself to play Brutus? How may we create a relationship between her and Frances Barber's (Caesar's) character that helps illuminate their relationship in the play?

As we work through the play, we fold in this reality, creating layers on which the text sits; every decision is born out of the text, and we refer back to it constantly. The text is king, and everything we do is to illuminate and explore it. Another fantastic week.

Jen Joseph



WEEK FIVE

This week's work has started to pull the show into focus. The room is wonderful; creative, open, expressive, imaginative. We have an excess of ideas and explorations, and now we need to pull them into a shape.

For Phyllida and the cast, improvisations and explorations are research. By improvising the content of a scene before we work on staging it, we can illuminate and open up parts of the text we might not have focused on. By working on Mark Antony's speech with various props chucked in the mix, or by throwing a ball on changes of thought we can underline elements and discover nuances.

Our work on Mark Antony's speech is a great example of this. We have already run through the text technically. Phyllida is adamant that the delivery of the verse in this production is world class. Phyllida and Barbara (Houseman, vocal coach) have both worked with Cush Jumbo (playing Mark Antony) to make the verse technically perfect. Changes of thought, caesurae, pronunciation, clarity, placement of the breath, rhythm, are all focused on and made solid. Cush is superbly naturally gifted in her delivery of the Shakespearean text, and by further equipping her with these tools she is really flying. Hearing a woman deliver the famous speech 'Friends, Romans, Countrymen...' is exciting. Watching Cush do it with such skill is thrilling.

Mark Antony is of course, delivering the speech to the people of Rome. In the text, they are often referred to as the 'mob'. They are seen as fickle, changeable, malleable. In our discussions of the text we have frequently discussed how manipulative the speech is. Phyllida is very keen to show this, to show how directly Mark Antony is controlling the reactions of the mob. So we start from there. If she is creating a reaction- what reaction does she want? Gary Yershon runs a session in which he provides us with a vocal paint-box of noises to

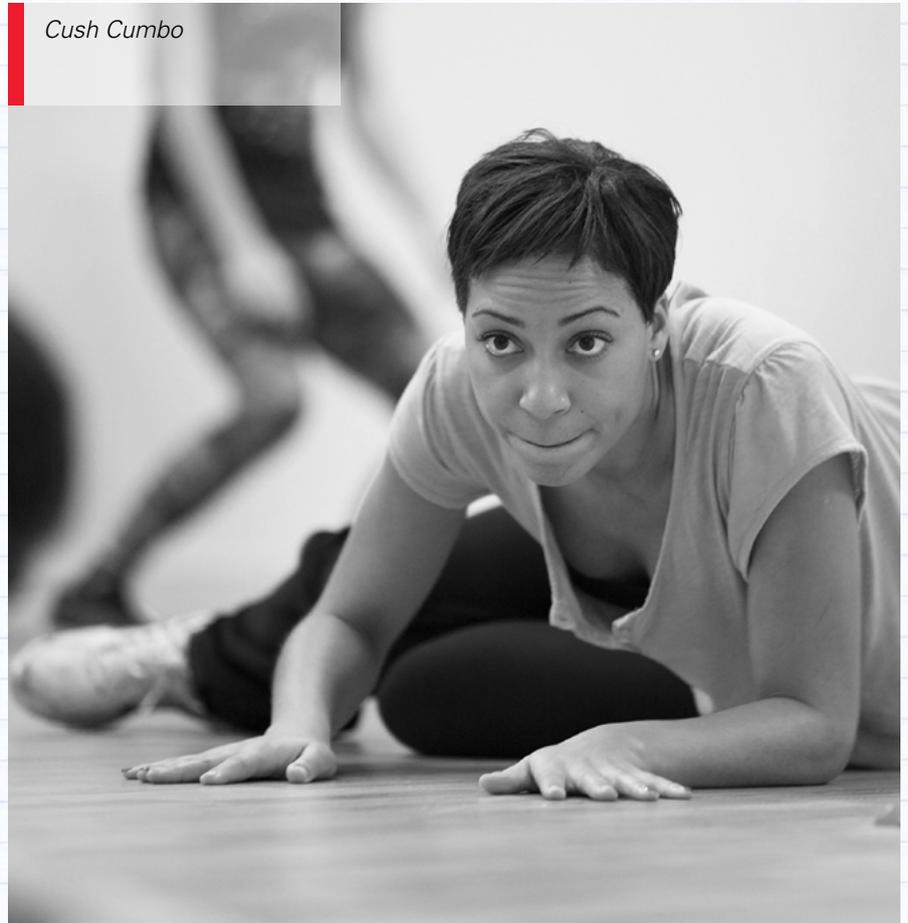
use. From keening, to the noise of a punch, he creates a set of vocal reactions for us to play with. In this session Gary is also signaling with his hand to achieve what he wants- literally composing with their voices live. By raising his hand the voices get louder. A sudden closed fist is silence. Phyllida asks Cush to start performing the script- and to signal,

with Gary's signals, for what noise she wants when she wants it. By the end of the session the mob is crying when she wants it, moaning and shouting when she wants it, and making a low guttural expulsion of air to illuminate the descriptions of the stabbing. As Mark Antony works the mob into a frenzy, never has his ability to control them been more clear.

By the end of the week these reactions are refined and worked into the text. The result is astonishing. A famous oft-quoted speech is made new, bold and bizarre. We see how manipulative Mark Antony is. We see the crowd changing before our eyes.

The week continues in this way: making decisions on specific elements of the staging, distilling the wealth of imaginative content into clear delineated staging.

Cush Cumbo



Phyllida Lloyd



WEEK SIX

Last week's work brought us closer to the final product. This week it has been buoyant and joyous to see our work become what it needs to be. The cast and creative teams are beyond excited. The rehearsal room feels like a special place to be.

We start by running the first 'half' of the play, which we are taking as the start to just after Mark Antony's speech. The first time we run it the cast are delighted. 'It all works!' 'We all remembered where we were going!'. It's a rollercoaster of a piece, and staying true to our locked prison setting, no-one leaves the space. This means that in this first run, props go astray, wires end up in a tangle and costumes are left all over the place. The rehearsal room is a magnificent mess and we are all afloat with enthusiasm.

The week develops with a run of the second half on Tuesday, and full runs for the rest of the week. Aside from runs, our days are spent changing and refining what we have that works, and getting rid of anything that doesn't. Evening rehearsals are usually close work with two or three people, save for a large band and cast rehearsal on Thursday to work on our 'wars'.

In the script there are two battles; the first results in Cassius killing himself, and the second

in Brutus killing himself. The battle sequences are notoriously complex in their action (there are four armies fighting, and various points of advantage for each one). In previous 'war' calls we have played with images of death and destruction, and women within war. Phyllida has been encouraging the cast to create a visceral reaction to the idea of war, and what we made didn't disappoint. But as we run the piece we realize that the war sequences are still confusing

in context of the greater flow of the story. To this end we make a decision that the first war should belong to Cassius and directly affect him, and the second to Brutus, and directly affect him. By using our mobile drum unit as a tank or armoured vehicle, Cassius is moved around the stage at extraordinary speed as we see his armies desert him. In the second war Brutus' marching army is slowly decimated as a single naked girl walks through the melee.

The week is full of refinements that are born of running the show as a complete piece. Josie (Rourke, Artistic Director), Kate (Pakenham, Executive Producer) and Jo (Danvers, General Manager) are among the staff of the Donmar who come to lend their support and watch a run. Fantastic feedback and suggested changes are given and worked through. At a breakneck speed the piece is adjusted, improved upon, and made clear.

We are working hard towards next week, and cannot wait to get the piece into the theatre and onto the fantastic set Bunny has created for us.



A conversation with Phyllida Lloyd, Director

Why JULIUS CAESAR, and why all female?

I've directed an all female production of a Shakespeare before (*The Taming of the Shrew* at the Globe in 2003), and I could see how when you do these plays with one gender certain themes that may be more hidden when you've got a mixed-sex company suddenly become brilliantly clear. In the case of Shakespeare's comedies, that tends to be the theme of gender: in *The Taming of the Shrew* it was gender politics and the powerlessness of women, and something very hilarious and playful came out of that adventure. But this time I wanted to choose a play in which gender was not the sole issue. I wanted to look at certain territory that actresses rarely get to explore in the classical repertoire. They rarely get to be political leaders, they rarely - or never - get to be murderers; they get to be the murderer's assistant. The point about this play is that they get to play everything, not just the love interest. They get to fill every single job in a world of politics and, as we say, Realpolitik- the world of pragmatic political operation.

I've also been interested for a long time in exploring women and leadership. I've done a number of projects that have focused on this theme, most recently Schiller's *Mary Stuart* which is a great play about women and leadership, but with only 3 roles for women in it. I've also directed an opera by Benjamin Britten called *Gloriana* which is about Elizabeth I- the tension between her private passion and her public duty, which is again a brilliant examination of the pressures on a leader. I've directed an opera called *The Dialogue of the Carmelites* which is about an order of Carmelite nuns who have to address questions about the power of women and leadership during the French revolution, and I've just made a film called *The Iron Lady* about Margaret Thatcher which looks at the struggle of a lower middle-class woman to get her voice heard. So in some ways this is the next project on the desk that allows women's voices to be heard in an exploration of leadership. I looked at a large number of Shakespeare plays before I gravitated towards this.

Why have you set the play in a prison?

As a group of women who are enjoying home comforts in a comparatively free society and a daily life that is largely free of violence, I felt that we needed to create a world for our production which closed the gap between the world we live in and the violent tyrannous atmosphere in which JULIUS CAESAR takes place. The women in the prison know what it feels like to have lost their freedom, and many of them have an understanding of violence; they may have been violent themselves, or have been victims of violence in their outside lives. I felt it was important that the audience believe that the girls who are performing this play carry with them something of a world of oppression and violence. By setting it in a prison we are creating a world in which violence is ever-possible, freedom is restricted, power and hierarchy are the meat and drink of every person who is incarcerated; where status is important, and where superstition is rife.

Most of the characters in JULIUS CAESAR have been soldiers; they have a background of violence. They have all been killers in war, and they are living in a very oppressive society. So the setting tries to close that gap for the audience and the actors.



Jenny Jules with members of the company

Are the female actors playing men?

Harriet Walter (playing Brutus) and I, prior to starting rehearsals, did some workshops on the play with a group of women in Holloway prison, in an effort to find out whether the prison context for the production would work. One day when we were rehearsing the murder of Caesar I asked the conspirators whether they were men or women. I stopped them as they were coming across the floor towards Caesar and I said 'okay, just tell me, do you feel that you are men or women?' and the girl playing Brutus said 'I feel that I'm more the character'. And I think in some ways that's how we've approached it. In the scenes in which the issue of gender is clear - for example, where one of the characters has a wife - it's become very clear that the person who is a husband is a man and the wife is a woman. But in other scenes we haven't focused on 'am I acting a man or a woman?' but more 'what's my character actually doing here?' If we are playing killers then do we have the bearing of a killer? If we are playing great statesmen, do we have the bearing and presence of great statesmen and politicians? So yes we are playing men, but we're not playing men in the sense of stick on moustaches and shoulder pads.

How have you approached the staging of violence in the play?

It seems to me that there is no doubt that women commit less violent crime than men. That suggests that women are on the whole less violent than men, or that violence is a manifestation of something different in men and women. I believe, and I'm not the first person to have suggested this, that men resort to violence as a way of taking control and asserting power over each other, and that women resort to violence as a symptom of loss of control. This poses a challenge if you are doing a play like JULIUS CAESAR, because these are a group of women who plan a cold-blooded murder. So, we needed to find the mindset that this group of actresses has to get into to close the gap between themselves and the conspirators. As it has turned out, though, it hasn't been as hard as we thought it might be for the actors to imagine themselves into a state of vengeance, fury, and fear that might prompt them to kill. I think that one of the remarkable things about theatre is that it asks us to consider that actions

that we might think are unbelievably far away from our own instincts and characters suddenly seem quite possible when you change a few things about the circumstances of your life. Most people who live in a free society, who have enough to eat and enough to drink, and a nice comfortable home, might think that killing someone is impossible. But if you thought that someone was coming to take away your home, or your land, or you didn't have enough to eat, or enough for your children, suddenly it becomes easier to imagine that one might become capable of murder.

Do you always approach a project with a social or political issue in mind?

I cannot imagine taking on a single production that wasn't in some way a reflection of the world outside. Every step we take when we are making our performance is in relation to the world we know, the world we imagine and the world we fear. It's all a mirror of the life beyond. An evening in the theatre could be a call to arms, a plea for tolerance, or it could be an evening of downright silliness. But whatever it is is calculated to in some way stimulate the audience. In the case of an evening of downright silliness or pleasure, that might be to make people feel happier when they are feeling sad, make them feel part of something when they are feeling alone. Or a play that's a plea for tolerance might want the audience to be more compassionate and understanding about something they felt they either didn't know about, or that they did know about but are not seeing all sides of, or are not being open enough to see all sides of. So theatre is the most fantastic tool for changing the way we feel and think. I'm not sure that theatre does have the power to end world wars or start them even, god forbid, but it is the most civilizing tool that I can think of in bringing out people's compassion and humanity.



Members of the company

A conversation with Harriet Walter, playing Brutus

You play Brutus, a male role. How did Phyllida Lloyd approach the idea that you would be playing a male character, and how did you feel about that?

We first talked about the idea of an all-female cast, without specifically saying that I was going to be in whatever it was, because she hadn't decided on the play yet. She settled on JULIUS CAESAR out of the three different plays that she had in her head.

For a while I wasn't sure which part I wanted to play - I thought Brutus was quite tricky. I didn't think about the male thing too much, although I've always thought that I could play a man somewhere, because I've never felt defined by my gender in my performing. If I can lock onto the spirit of somebody, on to the intellect of somebody, onto the heart of somebody, I don't really operate from what gender they are, particularly in a language play where the important thing is to get your character from the language and plot. I had a vision, I had pictures of how I could turn myself into something I could believe as being more masculine. Rather like Antony Sher draws pictures of himself, I reached towards the image that I created, so I did have a vision of Brutus. It isn't quite what I am doing now, but it was part of my thoughts very early on; what the image would be that I would believe. When I had that image I realized that it probably was the part that made the most sense for me to play.

Charlotte Josephine and Harriet Walter



Harriet Walter



In your book (*Other People's Shoes: Thoughts on Acting*), you talk about a continual learning process, even though you've been in so many amazing productions. Can you tell me why you think it's so important as an actress to always learn, and anything that you feel that you have learned from working on this production?

First of all I just think that live theatre is kept alive by the actors actually living in the moment. It sounds so obvious but actually to be open to the possibility of doing something that you hadn't planned for is tricky. For me being outside of my comfort zone, having a very immediate response to an atmosphere on that day with that audience, or something that's coming at you from another actor, is where I get my pleasure from in live performance. It's almost like being a tennis player; you are getting served at in a slightly different way, at a different speed. You've got to be very ready to react and so that sort of pre-disposes me to learning.

Every production is different, so there will be different things to learn in order to be adaptable for that particular production. The obvious factor in this production was to learn to simplify my physique in a certain way, and have to stick my hands in my pockets and stand square on, because I tend to be a bit over-gestural. I had to learn to have confidence that my internal strength will give me some sort of solidity, which is something that I never quite trust when playing a woman. We'll see what effect this has the next time I'm playing a female character, and see if I can find that stillness.

In a funny way it's a gift if you have a big part - you don't have to make a fuss. You're going to get attention and be noticed anyway, people are going to listen to you anyway, whereas sometimes if you've got a smaller or more peripheral part, you feel the need to decorate and adorn, and make it very clear who you are in short bursts and short appearances and therefore you become fussier. And I think I've learnt to be confident about being a bit more still.

In the newspaper article that you wrote (for *The Times*, 29 November 2012) and in rehearsals, you have mentioned that you felt that it's important that women are given opportunities to play bigger roles. You wrote movingly about how being excluded from playing large Shakespeare roles on the grounds of gender is like a female musician being banned from playing Beethoven. Can you talk to us about your feelings on this issue?

I think somehow our culture has just marginalized women. Our 'culture', meaning 'in the arts'- has marginalized the women's voice. It goes back so many hundreds of years that it's hard to overturn that in a short space of time. Women participate 100% at all levels in the experience of being a human being, yet too often in our narratives, in our stories, in our paintings, and in our dramas we play a function in a male story and it's a male point of view that gets written down. It's become a tradition, and from that tradition there comes an expectation of who is going to carry the baton forward. Who's going to be the Hamlet of this generation? And the next generation? But it's Hamlet. Hamlet represents humanity in a way that no female character does - he represents universal humanity. Women don't get the chance to play that.

For me, I just don't find myself very defined by my gender or sexuality so it's not so important to me, but there are people you can point to and say 'well their whole contribution is based on gender', like Marilyn Monroe for example. Her contribution to the canon has been based on her femininity and her sexuality. She did, of course, have much more to her, but she was robbed of that because she had to be put in that place, and she rose to mammoth fame based on that. It's very tempting to play that card as a woman, if you can. I couldn't play that card so I went into things I found more interesting. I feel as engaged as men do with the big questions of life, as I'm sure most women do. We just very seldom get to play that out in the narrative.

You've worked with Phyllida before, and she works in a very innovative way. Is that something you enjoy?

I totally enjoy it. I was trying to define what it is about her that is so extraordinary. She has great courage, which is inspirational. You trust her because she's very observant. Sometimes, if you can't see what you are doing wrong as an actor, and a director sees very clearly something that's wrong with a scene, that you'd felt too, and then you see them correct it, you develop a great trust in their insight and their responses.

Phyllida is never cruel or unkind, she always treats work as an experiment that might not work, that could be her fault. She takes responsibility and she's calm as well, so you don't feel any emotional obligation to support her in that way that you sometimes do in a rehearsal room - to support the director's ego. Actors get subjective. We get moody, we get involved so we can't see the wood for the trees, all that stuff, so you really need the opposite perspective, which she provides. It's a yin and a yang, and it works really well. If you have a director who's objective and can see the balance of things from the outside, who encourages you to 100% commit yourself to what you are doing then you are very lucky. If you have a director that you also trust will take care of it if it's not working, that makes for a very safe but exciting environment.

You worked with women in Holloway prison, and we have cast members who have been in contact with the penal system in different ways. Why do you think JULIUS CAESAR works so well in a prison setting?

First of all, it's a brilliant stepping stone for female actors to get into the play, because it's easier to relate to getting into character as a female prisoner character than it is to step straight into the shoes of a Roman soldier. It means that the burden of imagining us as men is lifted off the audience- they know that we are women. The flatness of our uniform helps the audience's imagination to leap into the play - they can project onto it.

The metaphor of an incarcerated group of people who are dependent on favours and handouts and punishments and everything else from a superior power is also neat. That is everyday life in a prison. People's lives are at stake in a prison, their futures are at stake. We can be quite comfortable when we are just going to a piece of theatre with a bunch of actors in it because we luckily don't live in a very dangerous world in the UK, but it was very dangerous at the time of Shakespeare and somehow the danger in the prison, the proximity to death fits both worlds (of the prison, and of JULIUS CAESAR) so well. There are women in Holloway who have killed or have seen people killed - it's not like a softie bourgeoisie actor like me who hasn't been in that environment! But I can imagine myself into it more easily through the prison metaphor than jumping straight into ancient Rome. We visited prisons and talked to prisoners, and the common humanity is what jumps out.



Harriet Walter

Section 3

Resources





Spotlight

Kate Waters, Fight Director

Kate Waters (known in the industry as Combat Kate) is one of just two female fight directors on Equity's list. As well as working as Fight Director on JULIUS CAESAR, her recent work includes *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *One Man, Two Guvvornors* at the National Theatre.

Can you tell me what a Fight Director is?

A Fight Director's role is to choreograph the physical violence in a show, which can vary from a sword fight to a punch-up to a grab to a slap. Any of those things that require the actor to have some kind of physical intent of a violent nature needs to be looked at by a Fight Director. A Fight Director should know how to solve problems and cover up things that the audience shouldn't see; to hide the trick of how it's done. They should help the actor and guide the actor through their storyline and through their motivation into the moment of physical violence.

Jade Anouka with Frances Barber



Are there any key preparations that a Fight Director needs to do?

Yes - several. The first thing a Fight Director needs to do is read the play, so that they know the reasons for the violence within the piece. They need to understand the motivation within a character for that violence, so the fight doesn't stand out from the rest of the play and sits within the action of the play. So those are the two things that are really important before you even enter the rehearsal room. The next thing is obviously to work within the capabilities of the actors and ensure that they feel happy with what they need to execute on stage for you. The other thing that you have to do, once you've done all of that, is to make it look as real as you possibly can so that the audience have a sense that something is happening for real - although obviously it isn't real.

How do you approach working with a director? How do Fight Directors and Directors work together?

It can vary depending on the director. I work with lots of different directors who have lots of different ways of working so what I have to do, very quickly, is to ascertain the way that the director works, and the way the room is run, and adapt and fit into that. I've worked with a lot of directors several times, so we have a dialogue and I know what's expected from me. I would always like to discuss with a director their vision for the violence. They're not necessarily going to know how to execute it physically, but they'll always have a vision for it, and then I can work within that vision. I see myself as a facilitator for the play. I fill in the gaps, rather than have an overall vision for the piece, because that's not my job, that's the director's job. So I have to work within the director's vision. I can offer things that I think might be better, because of the skills and experience I have in my own area, and the director will look at it and see if they like it or not, if they believe it or not. It's a collaborative effort between the director and the Fight Director to get the most out of that moment of the play. If there is a murder or a killing, like there is in JULIUS CAESAR, it changes the course of events for the play, because where do you go from that moment? It has to make an impact. If you are going to choose to stage a moment like that you're making a statement, and a statement that has to be carefully realized.

How did you become a Fight Director?

I initially trained as an actress, and first encountered stage combat through that. I'd done lots of martial arts as a youngster: I did Judo from the age of seven to a high standard and I also did a lot of dancing. I was one of those people who was always physically comfortable and able to pick things up physically very quickly. So I was always interested in the physical side of theatre anyway, and when we did stage combat classes at college, I just took to them really, and I knew that combat was an area that I felt really comfortable in, and it excited me. I realized that I enjoyed being on the other side rather than being in the show, I wanted to create and to be in rehearsals solving problems, so I decided to take that direction.

Does it help to have a good biological or anatomical understanding of the body?

Yes, it really does actually. This has been something that I've had to learn as I've gone along. I have done a massage course to understand more about the body and how it works. And also, for me, doing things physically is really natural, and I don't really think about it too much, but for actors it might not lie within their comfort zone, so I've got to understand how other people's body's might do something rather than my own body. When an actor is tentative about doing a fight, they'll tense up. I've got to guide them through that and understand what's making that happen, and try to work around it. It doesn't mean to say you don't challenge an actor- it's important to challenge them and for them to go out of their comfort zone, but also you've got to make them feel good about what they are doing. So, yes, it's really important to have a good sense of the body and how different bodies work, and to understand the differences between bodies; height, shape, fitness, age.

In a show like *Julius Caesar*, where somebody is being stabbed and is dying or having a reaction to a very extreme and specific form of violence, how do you know how the body is going to sound or react?

I research. Talk to people. I read up, I talk to experts or people who've seen that. My mum was a nurse so I have that kind of background. I've talked to doctors, about how your body would actually react. How would a body react when it is being stabbed? I listen to the natural instincts of the body. Your body has an in-built instinct to survive, which we call your 'fight or flight mechanism'. Everybody has it. It's just like if you are crossing the road and a car is coming, you will naturally speed up to save yourself, you're not going to just stand there and let the car knock you over. It's the same thing in a fight. If I am strangling someone or I am putting a knife into someone, not for real obviously, I'm trying to think about how my body would react to that. So with a knife for example, when it's going in, the muscles are going to contract around the blade, because that's what your muscles naturally do when there is an injury occurring in your body, because it's trying to protect further damage to that area. Your blood is starting to pump around your body faster because your body is going into shock which makes you breathe more heavily and the sense of tension that is going through your body, will also affect your movement. So I try to think about all of those things and get the actors to visualize it themselves, so that they understand that it's not just the move, it's how one does the move, and how one reacts to the move that sells the action. I don't want to see the technique of the moves on stage. I can teach actors the technique, but then they have to embrace that, and act it. Without that it will never ever work.



Jade Anouka, Frances Barber, and Ishia Bennison

Is it different working with an all-female cast, as opposed to a mixed group or a group of men?

Because of the nature of the way plays are written, I mostly work with men. So that's why I was interested in this project, because I thought it was a unique experience to work with women doing these parts, and having to do what would traditionally be a male role. I think that it's been very interesting. The one thing that I was quite concerned about was that I didn't want it to look like women fighting, however people might perceive what that is. But I didn't want them to go butch and try to be men either - I wanted them to try to find it for themselves, and find the strength that you need when you are fighting: to inhabit the action. When I look at the female boxers at the Olympics I don't think women and I don't think men, I just think 'woah, strength.' And a sense of clarity of movement. That's what I wanted for this production, that there was a strength in them and that they weren't apologizing for what they were doing. When I think of myself as a Fight Director, I am a woman, and the way I approach my work is probably how a woman would approach it, but I don't know what it is like to be a man, so when I am working I don't think of myself as male or female, just as Kate, the Fight Director. So I wanted the actors to feel their strength and not apologise for their movement.

Without giving away how we are killing Caesar, what do you have to take into consideration while working in a space like the Donmar, where the audience are in such close proximity?

It can be difficult actually, but I like these spaces because it feels like the audience are part of the action, and while it's actually very safe, it feels dangerous. That's exciting. When I first started doing this I wasn't working on the Olivier stage, I was working in small theatres, and one in particular was the Tobacco Factory in Bristol, doing Shakespeare there, so I was doing sword fights in a small space with the audience all the way around, and it was incredibly exciting. So these spaces don't worry me. I obviously have to try to make it as real as I can and try to hide the technique, which can be more tricky than in a larger space. With the Cinna fight I do that by using a lot of contact, and I try to avoid all the clichéd stage punches and slaps where you can see how it is done. I've tried to make it rough and ready and raw and messy, because for me, that's how fights are, and that's where my best work is, in creating that energy.

Exercises

Take a look at this extract from an early scene in the play, in which Julius Caesar reveals what he thinks of Cassius.

Caesar	Let me have men about me that are fat, Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights. Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look: He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.	200
Antony	Fear him not, Caesar, he's not dangerous. He is a noble Roman, and well given.	
Caesar	Would he were fatter! But I fear him not: Yet if my name were liable to fear, I do not know the man I should avoid So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much, He is a great observer, and he looks Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays, As thou dost, Antony: he hears no music: Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit That could be moved to smile at anything. Such men as he be never at heart's ease Whiles they behold a greater than themselves, And therefore are they very dangerous.	205 210 215

- Read the extract aloud around the circle, taking one line each, or taking a phrase each, depending on the size of the group.
- As a group, discuss any words or phrases that are unclear in your section.
- Work with the people on either side of you to find a way of expressing your section as clearly as possible – if you want to change words or phrases to make them more modern, that is fine. Just make sure that it is as clear as it can possibly be.
- Read the extract around the circle again, this time using your updated versions – what becomes clearer this time? Is anything lost by doing this?
- Read the extract once more, in the original version, but trying to convey the same level of meaning that you had in your updated version.
- Working in small groups, look at the extract again. Write down everything that Caesar and Antony say about Cassius in this section – what do we learn about the character of Cassius?
- Working individually, think about what you have learned about Cassius in this extract. Walk around the room and think about how this character might move, given what you know about him. How does he speak? How does he react to the other people around him? After you have experimented with this, feed back some of your ideas to the rest of the group.

- Look at the extract again. In the Donmar's production, Cassius is onstage with Caesar and Antony during this scene, and can hear this entire conversation. Think about what Caesar is trying to do to Cassius in the scene. Is he trying to humiliate him? To unsettle him? To threaten him? What is Caesar's intention? If you have time, look at what Caesar is trying to do with each line or phrase, as his intention may shift through the extract. (for an example of how the exercise was applied to a different scene, look at the annotated extract on page 35).
- Once you have done this, work in groups of three, with one actor playing Antony, one Caesar, and one Cassius. The actor playing Caesar should try to clearly demonstrate his intentions through the scene. Cassius needs to decide how to react to Caesar. Is he hurt? Is he dismissive? How does Antony feel being caught in the middle of this?
- Once you have played the scene a few times, think about the fact that Caesar is far more powerful than Cassius, and has the power to have him killed if he wants. How does this affect the scene?

Jen Joseph



- Look at this extract from the script of JULIUS CAESAR, along with Hannah Price's notes. What do the notes tell you about how to approach this speech in performance? Is there any information in the notes that surprises you? Try reading the speech in a group, and discuss each of the notes as you get to the appropriate section in the text.

CASSIUS

APPALL Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world

These are the 'actions' ascribed to each line. This method of rehearsal is explained in greater detail in the rehearsal diary. Loosely each line must act on the other character in the scene. So when Cassius says the first line he wants to 'appall' Brutus. An action must be a transitive verb.

Shakespeare knew that Cassius later sacked Rhodes, so would see the Colossus

Like a Colossus, and we petty men

Walk under his huge legs and peep about

To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

Dishonour in death: an enormous concept for Roman men. One of the worst fates that could befall you.

AWAKEN Men at some time are masters of their fates.

145

This was an earth shattering idea at this time, when pre-ordination was the over-riding idea of the day. Kings could only rule if their divine right was upheld.

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars

But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

SEDUCE Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that 'Caesar'?

Set up questions and then answer them, A strong rhetorical device

DARE Why should that name be sounded more than yours?

FASCINATE Write them together, yours is as fair a name:

150

Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well:

Weigh them, it is as heavy: conjure with 'em,

Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Caesar.

Brutus' name could have as great an impact on a person's spirit as Caesar's

TERRIFY Now in the names of all the gods at once,

There is a cut here, as can be seen from the line numbers. Phyllida cut this before rehearsal, believing it to be a repeat of the line that comes after it. It read "Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods! / When went there by an age, since the great flood, / But it was famed with more than with one man?"

Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed

That he is grown so great? — Age, thou art shamed!

GOAD

When could they say, till now, that talked of Rome,

155

This literally means 'this age' so the times we are living in

160

We cut this section in rehearsal, believing it to be a repeat of the line before, and that the pun in the text that would have made sense in Shakespeare's time (when 'Rome' was pronounced 'room') now doesn't have the same impact.

That her wide walks encompassed but one man?

Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough

When there is in it but one only man.

SHAME

But woe the while, our fathers' minds are dead,

This section is not here in the original. It is Cassius' line from a later scene that Phyllida cut. It's included here to make a stronger sense of the idea that women are weak, and to explore the references to women in the play.

And we are governed with our mothers' spirits:

Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish.

burden

!

Bibliography and suggestions for further reading

There is a wide range of material available on JULIUS CAESAR – below are some sources that were used in the rehearsal process for this production.

Guy de la Bedoyere, *The Romans for Dummies* (2006).

The Corston Report: A Report by Baroness Jean Corston of a Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System (2007)

Julius Caesar (trans. Gardner & Handford), *The Conquest of Gaul*, (1984).

Julius Caesar, *The Civil War*, (1976).

Robert Harris, *Imperium*, (2009).

Terry Johnson, Marina Caldarone and Maggie Lloyd-Williams, *Actions: The Actor's Thesaurus* (2004).

Alan Massie, *Caesar: a novel*, (1994).

C. T. Onions and Robert D. Eagleson, *A Shakespeare Glossary* (1986).

Roxana Saberi, *Between Two Worlds: My Life and Captivity in Iran* (2010)

Harriet Walter, 'Imagine you are capable of playing Beethoven's piano concertos, but are forbidden to perform them because you are a woman', *The Times* (29 November 2012).

Harriet Walter, *Other Peoples' Shoes: Thoughts on Acting* (1999).

VII Photo Agency, *Questions without Answers: The World in Pictures from the Photographers of VII* (2012). **N.B. This book is not suitable for younger readers.**



About the Donmar Warehouse

.....

The Donmar Warehouse is an intimate not for profit 251 seat theatre located in the heart of London's West End. Since 1992, under the Artistic Direction of Sam Mendes, Michael Grandage, and now Josie Rourke, the theatre has presented some of London's most memorable theatrical experiences and has garnered critical acclaim at home and abroad. With a diverse artistic policy that includes new writing, contemporary reappraising of European classics, British and American drama and musical theatre, the Donmar has created a reputation for artistic excellence over the last 19 years and has won 43 Olivier Awards, 26 Critics' Circle Awards, 27 Evening Standard Awards, two South Bank Awards and 20 Tony Awards from ten Broadway productions. Alongside the Donmar's productions, we offer a programme of Education events, which includes subsidised tickets, introductory workshops and post show discussions, as well as special projects which give young people an opportunity to involve themselves more closely in the work of the theatre.

For more information about the Donmar's education activities, please contact:

Education Department
Donmar Warehouse
41 Earlham Street
London WC2H 9LX
T: 020 7845 5822
F: 020 7240 4878

W: www.donmarwarehouse.com/education