



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

JULIUS
CAESAR

SHAKESPEARE
ON TOUR

William Shakespeare's
Julius Caesar

Cast

Julius Caesar/Cinna the Poet/Citizen/Octavius.....	Brandon DiPaola
Brutus.....	Gina White
Cassius.....	Christopher Prescott Carter
Mark Antony/Soothsayer/Decius Brutus/Citizen.....	William Brosnahan
Portia/Calpurnia/Casca/Citizen.....	Sarah Dunnivant

Alternates

Brandon Milligan (Julius Caesar/Cinna the Poet/Citizen/ Octavius/Brutus)
Miriam Valencia (Cassius/Portia/Calpurnia/Casca/Citizen)
Ezra Howlett (Mark Antony/Soothsaver/Decius Brutus/Citizen)

Creative Team

Director.....	April Ballesteros
Assistant Director/Rehearsal Stage Manager.....	Carla Pantoja
Fight Director/Artistic Director.....	Carla Pantoja
Vocal and Text Coach.....	Kate Al-Shamma
Costume Designer.....	Lyre Alston
Intimacy Director.....	Jeunée Simon
Tour Manager.....	Christopher Prescott Carter
Tour Program Manager.....	Evan Held

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our production treats Julius Caesar not as distant history but as a warning aimed directly at America now. We set the play in the shadow of World War I because it marks the moment when republics fractured under fear, nationalism, and the belief that extraordinary times require extraordinary men. However, the heart of this staging is America today. Like Rome, the United States is a republic built on shared power and civic trust, and like Rome, it faces moments when institutions are dismissed as weak, crowds are mobilized through grievance, and a single leader is elevated as indispensable.

Julius Caesar's rise mirrors this danger: a figure celebrated as the people's champion, convinced that order justifies overreach, and cheered as norms quietly erode. Our current leader's political persona echoes that pattern, casting himself as the only one who can fix a broken nation, framing opposition as disloyalty, and relying on spectacle and language to consolidate power.

Shakespeare shows us that the real tragedy is not one tyrant, but a society that applauds certainty over restraint and loyalty over truth. Our production is a reminder that democratic collapse is rarely sudden; it happens gradually, through polarization and normalization, often with outside pressures compounding internal divides. Rome believed itself eternal. America often does too. Julius Caesar asks whether we recognize how fragile a republic is and whether we will learn before the cheers give way to consequence.

- April Ballesteros, Director of Julius Caesar

SYNOPSIS

Julius Caesar, returning victorious to Rome from foreign wars, is escorted to the Capitol by the enthusiastic Citizens for a public celebration. On the way, he is warned by a Soothsayer to “beware the Ides of March.”

A group of conspirators, headed by Cassius, is disturbed by the power Caesar has gained and the idea that he might seize total power. To help their cause, Cassius attempts to persuade Brutus, a good friend of Caesar and a man well-known for his honesty, that the welfare of Rome demands Caesar’s death. Another conspirator, Casca, returns from the celebration and says that Mark Antony has offered Caesar the crown three times and that three times Caesar refused. Brutus promises to hear them out and that he will think about the idea.

Later, Casca meets Cassius on the street and is afraid because many things are happening. The sky is raining fire, and animals are walking in the street. Cassius says that it is a sign that the mighty Caesar will fall.

That night, a tormented Brutus walks in his Garden and debates whether to join the conspiracy. His fear that Rome may lose its freedom wins out over his admiration for Caesar, and at last he agrees to join with Cassius and the others, including Decius Brutus, Cinna, and Trebonius, to assassinate Caesar the next day. When the conspirators leave, his wife Portia demands to know what is going on.

The next morning is March 15, the Ides of March, and Calphurnia, Caesar’s wife, complains that she has had frightful dreams and has heard of evil omens. She urges her husband to avoid danger and stay home from the senate that day. After arguing that he will appear frightened or ignoble by staying home, Caesar finally gives into his wife and consents to staying with her. The conspirator Decius Brutus, however, come to his Palace, acting as friend and supporter, and succeeds in inducing him to accompany them, instead, to the Capitol.

In the Capitol, the Conspirators surround Caesar on the pretext of discussing business with him—and each, in turn, stabs him. Seeing Brutus’s thrust, Caesar exclaims “et tu, Brute” (you too, Brutus) and dies. Mark Antony, Caesar’s friend, confronts the Conspirators; and they seem to convince him that their actions were right, and they agree that Antony may speak at the funeral, as long as he does not condemn the conspirators. But once alone, Antony vows revenge to the audience.

Brutus speaks first at the funeral and convinces the Citizens that love of Rome alone made the murder necessary, a sentiment which is hailed with enthusiasm by the Citizens. Antony follows, praising Caesar, while calling Brutus and the Conspirators “honorable men.” He so cleverly twists the argument, without blaming the Conspirators, that the Citizens, a moment before cheering Brutus, turns in anger against the Conspirators, who are forced to flee from the city. Indeed things become so chaotic that Cinna the Poet, who had nothing to do with Caesar’s death, is killed by the Citizens just because his name is the same as one of the conspirators. The Conspirators are forced to flee from Rome.

In Rome, the ruling triumvirate of Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus formed after Caesar’s death organize a military force to fight the armies of Brutus and Cassius.

The opposing armies gather on the Battlefield of Philippi.

Meanwhile, the relationship between Cassius and Brutus has deteriorated into an open quarrel. After the argument is settled, Brutus confides to Cassius that his wife, Portia, has committed suicide. Later that night, unable to sleep, Brutus is stunned to see Caesar's ghost, who warns that he will meet him again at the Battlefield of Philippi.

That morning the armies meet and the forces of the triumvirate are victorious. Unwilling to endure defeat and dishonor, both Cassius and Brutus kill themselves with the help of their loyal slaves Pindarus and Lucius. Antony vows to give Brutus the funeral of a noble Roman and calls him "the noblest Roman of them all," since he was the only conspirator whose motive was not envy of the powerful Caesar.

CAST



BRANDON DIPAOLO
**(L TO R) JULIUS CAESAR/ OCTAVIUS/CINNA THE POET/
CITIZEN/**

Growing up in Hawaii but originally from the Bay Area, Brandon (he/him) is an actor, fight director and instructor with Dueling Arts International. He started his training at the Hawaii Conservatory of Performing Arts where he found a love for theater. His passion led him to study at the East 15 Acting School in England where he holds a Bachelor's in Acting and Stage Combat. His recent Bay Area roles include *Choir Boy* at Shotgun Player, *Shakespeare Reimagined* for AASC and Nofal in *Leili & Majnun* at Central Stage.



GINA WHITE
(BRUTUS)

Gina (they/them) is excited to be back in the Bay Area and working with SF Shakes again, after having previously been a performance intern during *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2018. Originally from San Jose, Gina recently graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a BFA in Acting, and is currently based in Chicago and the Bay Area. Recent credits include #46 in *The Wolves* (Renegade Theatre), and *Time*, u/s Antigonous, u/s Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* (Illinois Theatre). In their free time, they enjoy art in all of its non-theatre forms. ginakathwhite.com IG: [ginakathwhite](https://www.instagram.com/ginakathwhite)



**CHRISTOPHER PRESCOTT CARTER
(CASSIUS)**

Christopher is a prolific actor. He has worked with such theatre companies as Stanford Repertory Theatre in *Moby Dick Rehearsed*, and Theatreworks in *Big River*. He appeared in the original stage production of *The Kite Runner*. He is working with Fever in *The Jury Experience* as well as *Murder on the Seaside* and American Immersion Theater in *Death of Gangster*. He is the recipient of the Hal Todd Award for Excellence in Acting (2010), as well as a Theatre Bay Area Award for Best Ensemble (2015). This production marks his fourth season with the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival.



WILLIAM BROSNAHAN

(L to R) DECIUS BRUTUS /SOOTHSAYER /MARK ANTONY/CITIZEN

William Armstrong Brosnahan (he/him) is pumped to be returning for a third season with Shakespeare on Tour. He is a graduate from Carnegie Mellon School of Drama and has loved making the Bay his new home. His past roles include Romeo Montague/Servant-Abram in Shakespeare on Tour's *Romeo and Juliet*, Orlando in Shakespeare on Tour's *As You Like It*, a handyman/daemon in Mas Marami Art's Filipino family drama *Maldysion*, and Shotgun Player's *Yellow Face* in the role of Marcus.



SARAH DUNNAVANT

(L to R) PORTIA/CITIZEN/CASCA/CALPURNIA

Sarah (she/her) is thrilled to be part of this ensemble and creative team at SF Shakes! Recent work includes the West Coast Premier adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* (CenterREP), World Premier adaptation of *Frankenstein* (Theatre Lunatico), *Othello* (New Canon Theatre Co.), *Life Sucks* (New Canon), *Hamlet* (New Canon), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (6th St Playhouse) and *Steel Magnolias* (Cinnabar Theatre). She is honored to share timely and relevant interpretations of Shakespeare with young audiences and audiences of all ages.



ALTERNATES



BRANDON MILLIGAN - ALTERNATE (L to R) JULIUS CAESAR/CINNA THE POET/CITIZEN/ OCTAVIUS

Brandon (he/him) is an artist native to Washington, DC. He discovered his love for acting through doing short films in his last year of college at North Carolina A&T State University. There, he studied Kinesiology and uses this background to inform the physicality used in his performances. Since graduating, Brandon studied the craft at the American Conservatory Theater through their *Summer Training Congress* and *San Francisco Semester*, honing his voice, movement, and process for creating characters and performances. Through his art, Brandon aims to inspire different thinking and arise questions in his audience. This is Brandon's Shakespeare debut. brandondean.art.



MIRIAM VALENCIA - ALTERNATE (L to R) CASSIUS/CALPURNIA/CASCA/CITIZEN/PORTIA)

Miriam (she/they) is giving an enthusiastic "huzzah!" making her debut with the SF Shakespeare Festival! She has been acting locally in Sonoma County for about 2 years, and recently earned her acting certificate from Santa Rosa Junior College. Studying and performing Shakespeare has been a pivotal part of her journey as an artist, and she is looking forward to being a small part of bringing this incredible story to life.



**EZRA T. HOWLETT - ALTERNATE
(L TO R) MARK ANTONY/SOOTHSAYER/DECIUS BRUTUS/
CITIZEN**

Ezra (they/them) is thrilled to work with SF Shakes for the first time. Ezra has appeared in the A.C.T. Out Tour in *Measure for Measure* (The Duke) in 2024 and *Julius Caesar* (Portia/Decius/Lucius/Others) in 2025. Other theatrical credits include *Hamlet* (Laertes) with Vallejo Shakespeare in the Park; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Titania) with the Foodbank Players; *The Comedy of Errors* (Antipholus of Ephesus) with Prague Shakespeare Company; *Hamlet* (Rosencrantz) with the University of California, Berkeley Theater Department; and *Dog Sees God* (Van's Sister) and *1984* (The Loudspeaker) with Barestage Productions. Follow them @ez.how on Instagram for more updates.

CREATIVE TEAM



**APRIL BALLESTEROS
DIRECTOR**

April (she/her) is an actor, director, educator, and stage manager. She is the Associate Artistic Director of Theatre Cultura and worked in the Artistic Learning Department at the California Shakespeare Theater for 7 years. She has worked with SF Playhouse, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, SFBATCO, and Shotgun Players, to name a few. She earned a BA in Theatre Arts from California State University, East Bay, and hails from East Los Angeles. With every project she does, she hopes to empower and uplift BIPOC voices and stories.



**CARLA PANTOJA
FIGHT DIRECTOR/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Carla (she/they), born and raised in the South Bay, is also an actor, teaching artist, intimacy director, and mom of two – as well as artistic director for San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. She's been a Resident Artist since 2014 and recently served as Director of Vision for the 2021 Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, directing episodes 2 and 4. In 2020, she was in the acting company at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, returning in 2022 as the festival's first female fight director. Carla is an associate instructor for Dueling Arts International and serves on their governing body as Vice President. She is also a proud member of Making Good Trouble, an anti-racist training cohort based in the Bay Area. Carla has directed SF Shakes' Shakespeare on Tour previous productions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Comedy of Errors* and Assistant Directed the 2017 Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *Hamlet*. She played Paulina in Free Shakespeare in the Park's *The Winter's Tale*, Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*. She's performed with Cal Shakes, Shotgun Players, Crowded Fire, Playground, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, and the SF Mime Troupe in the Bay Area to name a few.



LYRE ALSTON
COSTUME DESIGNER

Lyre Alston (he/him/she/her) is a costume, wig, and makeup designer working within the Bay Area. This is Lyre's first season with SF Shakespeare, and as both a lover of Shakespeare and of creating accessible theatre, he is thrilled to participate in the production. Some previous work in the bay includes *The Addams Family* and *Annie* (2025) at Berkeley Playhouse, *Hadestown* at The Throckmorton Theatre (2025), and *Panto at The Presidio* (2021-2025). Please enjoy the show!



KATE AL-SHAMMA
VOICE AND TEXT COACH

Kate Yust Al-Shamma, Ph.D., teaches performance skills with the aim of building confidence in all participants. Kate currently serves Georgetown University as Curriculum Advisor and Professor for Summer Sessions, and the University of San Francisco as an adjunct professor. She is a former Theatre Program Director and Associate Teaching Professor at Georgetown University. For 25 years, Kate has been a theatre director and teacher of acting, voice, movement, and professional speaking. She has a 500-hour yoga teacher certification and incorporates physical release techniques into all coaching. Her research is grounded in three major areas: the mythopoesis of Pantheatre Paris, France; the somatic release work of Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts; the Neuroscience of Traumatic Stress of Bessel van der Kolk.



JEUNÉE SIMON
INTIMACY DIRECTOR

Jeunée (she/her) is bicoastal actor, director, and consent educator. She is dedicated to creating braver spaces where artists can be vulnerable and play. Recent intimacy direction credits include: *The Tutor* (NCTC), *Lear* (California Shakespeare Theater), *The Code* (A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory), *Coming Soon* (Z Space), *Boys Go to Jupiter* (Word for Word), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Custom Made Theatre Co.), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Berkeley Playhouse), and more. Simon is a proud recipient of the 2017 RHE Artistic Fellowship and was a 2019 Directing Apprentice with PlayGround. www.jeuneesimon.com.



EVAN HELD
TOUR PROGRAM MANAGER

Evan (he/him) is a graduate from the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts (PCPA), and excited to be working with Shakespeare on Tour's Romeo and Juliet! He's been involved in numerous Shakespeare productions across the years. He's done shows all over Sonoma and Marin counties with companies such as Shakespeare in the Cannery, Redwood Theater Company, Ross Valley Players, Spreckels, Word for Word, and Marin Summer Theater. He also performed in SF Shakes touring production of *The Comedy of Errors*.



What else does the Shakespeare Festival do?

FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK



This summer is the 44th season of our [Free Shakespeare in the Park](#) program, which has helped to make the words and themes of Shakespeare accessible to everyone. In 2026 we continue our season of “Empire” with *Antony and Cleopatra*. Set against the backdrop of the Roman Empire and Egypt, the play examines the conflict between duty and desire, and the impact of personal relationships on political power. Performing for thousands this July through September, the play travels from Cupertino’s Memorial Park, to Redwood City’s Red Morton Park, then San Francisco’s McLaren and Sue Bierman Parks. Dates, times, and locations are posted at sfshakes.org/

BAY AREA SHAKESPEARE CAMP



For over 30 years San Francisco Shakespeare Festival has been offering [Shakespeare Camps](#) for kids of all experience levels, ages 7 to 13. Two-week camp sessions meet weekdays in San Francisco’s Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in SF’s McLaren Park. Our teaching artists are working actors, stage managers, directors, and designers. In each session campers engage with each other in activities ranging from games and basic acting skills to more specialized training and deeper exploration of the themes and language of Shakespeare, culminating in a live performance attended by family and friends.

IN-SCHOOL SESSIONS



We also provide [in-school sessions](#) to help educators in the classroom. Let our expert teaching artists activate your students' creativity, connection, and confidence. Building upon the foundation of your classroom, we facilitate the artistic and personal growth of each student while transforming the group into a fun, engaging, interactive ensemble, using curriculum that is specifically tailored to learning objectives and adapts to students. Our Education program brings over 30 years of educational and theatrical expertise to students for an immersive experience that they will never forget! Most of our programs can be taught in-person or virtually.

Pricing or education questions? Contact education@sfsakes.org

SHAKESPEARE ON TOUR



Touring production of "As You Like It"

For 35 years our [Shakespeare on Tour](#) program has traveled across California to bring a one-hour version of a Shakespeare play to thousands of students. Our touring troupe brings sets, props, costumes, and music to enliven their active and engaging performance. The tour visits more schools and libraries than any other theater group in the state!

SHAKESPEARE'S HEARTBEAT



Shakespeare's Heartbeat uses the Hunter Heartbeat Method developed by Kelly Hunter of Flute Theatre, utilizing the iambic pentameter (heartbeat rhythm) of Shakespeare's words and the physicality of his characters to engage with students on the autism spectrum. It is also effective across a constellation of abilities. Geared towards grades 4-12, this program's interactive games and gestures are paired with short phrases from Shakespeare's works to improve social skills and help with identifying and expressing emotions.

SHAKESPEARE FOR ALL NEIGHBORS



Shakespeare for All Neighbors (S4AN) is a pilot storytelling workshop series taking place in San Francisco's Tenderloin. This ongoing program meets Friday afternoons. Neighbors experiencing homelessness in the Tenderloin engage with workshops in Shakespeare and Storytelling. Festival teaching artists lead group exercises in creative thinking, acting, improv, and storytelling.

For more information about these exciting programs and others, please visit sfshakes.org or call us at 415-558-0888.

We'd love to hear from you!



PO Box 460937 San Francisco CA 94146