

**RED BULL
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IN
ASSOCIATION
WITH

**THE
ACTING
COMPANY**

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KENT GASH | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

DEVIN BRAIN | PRODUCING DIRECTOR

ERIK SCHROEDER | MANAGING DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

ANTONY & CLEOPATRA

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ADAPTED BY DAKIN MATTHEWS

DIRECTED BY ARIN ARBUS

FEATURING

CARLO ALBÁN

ISABEL ARRAIZA

SHIRINE BABB

JIMONN COLE

DAKIN MATTHEWS

AJAY NAIDU

NICOLE ARI PARKER

MATTHEW RAUCH

ARIEL SHAFIR

DEREK SMITH

JOHN DOUGLAS THOMPSON

NICK WESTRATE

STAGE MANAGER | JESSICA FORNEAR

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER | JENN MCNEIL

SCHOLAR | TANYA POLLARD

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT | JOANA TSUHLARES

GENERAL MANAGER | SHERRI KOTIMSKY

PRODUCING DIRECTOR | NATHAN WINKELSTEIN

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2024 | 7:30 PM

THE LUCILLE LORTEL THEATRE | 121 CHRISTOPHER STREET

RED BULL THEATER IS SUPPORTED, IN PART, BY PUBLIC FUNDS FROM THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY COUNCIL, AND THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS, WITH THE SUPPORT OF GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL AND THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE.

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RED BULL THEATER IS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE ALLIANCE OF RESIDENT THEATERS/NEW YORK, THE OFF-BROADWAY LEAGUE, AND THEATER COMMUNICATIONS GROUP.



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DONATE TODAY TO SUPPORT RED BULL THEATER AND INVEST IN THE VITALITY OF CLASSICAL THEATER FOR A CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCE. FOR TWENTY YEARS, RED BULL THEATER HAS TRANSFORMED THE CLASSICAL THEATER EXPERIENCE WITH SPECTACULAR, HIGH-OCTANE PRODUCTIONS OF SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES, RAUCOUS READINGS OF RARELY-PRODUCED PLAYS, AND VIVID REIMAGININGS OF ICONIC WORKS.

WE'RE DEDICATED TO REVITALIZING THE CLASSICS FOR TODAY'S AUDIENCES, AND WHILE WE TREASURE THESE CLASSICS, OUR APPROACH IS ANYTHING BUT PRECIOUS. **YOUR SUPPORT IS.**

REDBULLTHEATER.COM

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Antony, <i>a triumvir of Rome</i>	JOHN DOUGLAS THOMPSON
Cleopatra, <i>Queen of Egypt</i>	NICOLE ARI PARKER
Octavius Caesar, <i>a triumvir of Rome</i>	NICK WESTRATE
Octavia, <i>sister to Caesar, later wife to Antony</i>	ISABEL ARRAIZA
Lepidus, <i>a triumvir of Rome</i>	DAKIN MATTHEWS
Enobarbus, <i>Antony's Lieutenant</i>	MATTHEW RAUCH
Pompey, <i>rebel against the triumvirs</i>	AJAY NAIDU

Serving in Cleopatra's Court

Charmian.....	SHIRINE BABB
Iras.....	ISABEL ARRAIZA
Alexas / Mardian / Messenger / Seleucus.....	DEREK SMITH
Diomedes.....	AJAY NAIDU
Soothsayer / Clown.....	DAKIN MATTHEWS

Accompanying Antony in Egypt and elsewhere

Eros / Canidius.....	CARLO ALBÁN
Scarus / Maecenus.....	ARIEL SHAFIR
Demetrius.....	AJAY NAIDU
Dercetas.....	SHIRINE BABB
Europhronius.....	DAKIN MATTHEWS

Supporting and accompanying Caesar

Agrippa / Thidias / Dolabella.....	JIMONN COLE
Gallus.....	AJAY NAIDU

Followers of Pompey

Menas.....	SHIRINE BABB
Varrus.....	CARLO ALBÁN

ABOUT THE PLAY

Antony and Cleopatra is one of only two Shakespeare plays to include a woman's name in its title. This unusual framing identifies the play, like *Romeo and Juliet*, as a love tragedy, an intrinsically hybrid genre combining tragedy's emphasis on a powerful man's fall with comedy's focus on the pleasure of surrendering to passion. It also signals a surprising balance of the sexes. Performed by apprentice boy actors, Shakespeare's women typically have smaller roles than their male counterparts, but even with fewer lines, Cleopatra repeatedly interrupts and upstages Antony with demands, declarations, threats, and laments. Even more significantly, by outlasting and memorializing him, she claims the final word in shaping their story. Just as she refuses to be overshadowed by her famous lover, she similarly refuses to surrender to Rome's imperial power. In the play's contest between empire against love, Cleopatra might lose the battle, but she wins the war: Rome ultimately defeats Egypt, but Antony, as well as dignity, remains hers.

The play's Roman characters repeatedly express bewilderment at Cleopatra's power over their storied hero: who is she, to ensnare Antony? Although Cleopatra's beauty has become legendary, Shakespeare's primary source, Plutarch, attributed her magnetism to her "irresistibly compelling powers of conversation," carried out in "any language that pleased her." Shakespeare similarly presents her eloquence and wit as the heart of her "infinite variety," with which, Enobarbus famously says, "she makes hungry / Where most she satisfies." Like the goddess of love, to whom the play compares her, Cleopatra sparks desire that overpowers even the attraction of political power.

A more pressing question might be, who is Antony, to capture Cleopatra's imagination? Other Romans describe him as a fading mythical figure, reduced by love "into a strumpet's fool." Even Cleopatra sometimes questions his greatness: "Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon, / The other way's a Mars." Yet Antony's passionate extremity promises a kind of transcendence. "For his bounty, / There was no winter in't," Cleopatra tells Dolabella; "an autumn 'twas / That grew the more by reaping." In response to gentle skepticism, she insists that he is "past the size of dreaming": paradoxically, "nature wants stuff / To vie strange forms with fancy; yet, to imagine / An Antony, were nature's piece 'gainst fancy." In this tussle between nature and fantasy, Cleopatra's vision somehow outdoes both.

Shakespeare identifies Cleopatra's distinctiveness with her Egyptian setting: although she was descended from the Greek Ptolemy family, the play presents her as "tawny," "black," and a "gypsy." Yet while the play's envious Romans attack her in racist, Orientalizing, and misogynist terms, Shakespeare follows Plutarch's ambivalent awe towards her lightning-like imagination, which sparks the play's theatrical electricity. As a powerful female monarch, she also recalls Elizabeth I, the beloved recently dead queen who expanded England's own imperial ambitions. Antony and Cleopatra ends with devastation, but still offers a kind of triumph. Its leading lady's reign over an empire of love, and the theatrical imagination, can ultimately only be conquered by herself.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564, and spent several decades honing his extraordinary literary talents in London's theater community before his death in 1616. He wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* around 1606-7, as part of a surge of tragedies including *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Timon of Athens* following shortly after the 1603 death of Elizabeth I and several years of especially violent plague bouts. Then as now, everyone working in the theater industry was jolted by the pandemic's economic, social, and emotional consequences, and Shakespeare would have been no exception. His son had died of plague in 1596, and his company members, whose families lived with them in London, had lost children more recently. Cleopatra's agonized elegy for Antony – "The crown o' the earth doth melt... young boys and girls / Are level now with men; the odds is gone, / And there is nothing left remarkable / Beneath the visiting moon" – imagines a post-apocalyptic landscape, implicitly conjuring the strange new world of post-plague, post-Elizabeth London life.

— **TANYA POLLARD** | Professor of English, Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, CUNY



Please join us after the performance for a brief discussion with director **ARIN ARBUS**, scholar **TANYA POLLARD**, Red Bull Theater Founder and Artistic Director **JESSE BERGER**, and members of the company.

CLASSICAL COMEDY INTENSIVE

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For hundreds of years, the great classic writers like Moliere, Shakespeare, and Rostand have had us rolling in the aisles with laughter at jokes and situations we already know but which stand the comedic test of time. But how do we still laugh at these plays? The answer is in the language, the situation, and most importantly the craft of the artist making you laugh seemingly by accident. Come learn from **CARSON ELROD**, one of the greatest Comedic Practitioners in New York, how to mine a script for comedic choices and how to see all of the comic gifts available to you in your scene partner, the set, and even your props.

REGISTER TODAY at RedBullTheater.com

ABOUT THE ACTING COMPANY

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kent Gash, Managing Director Erik Schroeder, and Producing Director Devin Brain, The Acting Company brings professional productions and education programs, in-school residencies, and teacher training workshops to thousands of audience members and students in underserved communities and schools each year. Founded by John Houseman and Margot Harley, the company seeks to develop emerging actors and build enthusiastic, knowledgeable audiences for the theater in towns across the United States. The Acting Company launched the careers of nearly 500 actors, including Kevin Kline, Patti LuPone, Mary Lou Rosato, Keith David, Rainn Wilson, Lorraine Toussaint, Frances Conroy, Harriet Harris, Lisa Banes, Jeffrey Wright, Hamish Linklater, Jesse L. Martin, Roslyn Ruff, Jimonn Cole, and Kelley Curran.

Over 5,000 students in New York City and across the country benefit from The Acting Company's in-school residencies and educator workshops every year. Annually, over 30,000 audience members see an Acting Company production across the country who otherwise lack access to professional classical theatre.

Among many accolades, The Acting Company received the 2003 Tony Award for Excellence in the Theater, and recently won the 2019 Audelco Award for Best Play for its production of Nambi E. Kelley's *Native Son* directed by Seret Scott.

Since 1972, The Acting Company has performed for over four million people in 48 States, 10 foreign countries, on and Off-Broadway, and at leading resident theaters including The Guthrie and The Kennedy Center. New works commissioned by the company include plays by William Finn, Marcus Gardley, Rebecca Gilman, John Guare, Beth Henley, Tony Kushner, Lynn Nottage, Meg Miroshnik, Ntozake Shange, Maria Irene Fornés, Spalding Gray, Marsha Norman, Charles Smith, Samm-Art Williams, and Wendy Wasserstein.

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THE ACTING COMPANY

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IN MEMORIUM

Anne L. Bernstein (1948–2021)

Louanna O. Carlin (1937–2021)

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Jill Edelson (1933–2020)

John N. Gilbert, Jr. (1938–2023)

THE ACTING COMPANY

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This event is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Our programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.



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The 2024 series is generously supported by Richard J. Reilly, Jr.

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Stephen McKinley Henderson

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and



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6:30PM – 11:30PM

Cocktail Hour & Silent Auction
Awards Presentations & Special Guest Performances
Dinner & Dancing

Dress Code: Festive Attire

Learn more and RSVP by April 19
at theactingcompany.org/gala



20TH ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL

Beginning April 15th, Red Bull Theater celebrates 20 years of being New York's Off-Broadway home for the rarely produced plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries with a month-long festival of work featuring:

Monday, April 15 | 7:30 PM

HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE

by Jacob Ming-Trent

Directed by Karen Ann Daniels

Featuring **Jacob Ming-Trent**

Thursday, April 18 | 7:30 PM

PERSON PLACE THING

with Randy Cohen

Featuring **Santino Fontana**

Saturday, April 20 | 7:30 PM

Sunday, April 21 | 2:00 PM

MACBETH

by William Shakespeare

Directed by Nathan Winkelstein

Tuesday, April 23 | 7:30 PM

GOD'S SPIES

by Bill Cain

Directed by Nathan Winkelstein

Featuring **Matthew Rauch**

Friday, April 26 | 7:30 PM

Saturday, April 27 | 2:00 & 7:30 PM

THE ROVER

by Aphra Behn

Directed by Gaye Taylor Upchurch

Featuring **Santino Fontana**

Monday, April 29 | 7:30 PM

THE TEMPEST

by William Shakespeare

Directed by Jesse Berger

Featuring **Reeve Carney** and **Patrick Page**

Monday, May 6 | 7:30 PM

OR, WHAT SHE WILL

by Liz Duffy Adams

Directed by Gaye Taylor Upchurch

Featuring **Rebecca Hall**

Wednesday, May 8 | 7:30 PM

PERSON PLACE THING

with Randy Cohen

Featuring **Patrick Page**

Friday, May 10 | 7:30 PM

Saturday, May 11 | 2:00 & 7:30 PM

TITUS ANDRONICUS

by William Shakespeare

Directed by Jesse Berger

Featuring **Patrick Page**
and **John Douglas Thompson**

Sunday, May 12 | 7:30 PM

MEDEA

by Euripides

Adapted by Ben Power

Directed by Daniel Fish

Featuring **Elizabeth Marvel**



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RED BULL THEATER

JESSE BERGER | FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
MARTIN GIANNINI | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Red Bull Theater brings rarely seen classic plays to dynamic new life for contemporary audiences. Our work unites a respect for tradition with a modern sensibility.

Red Bull Theater is named for the rowdy Jacobean playhouse that illegally performed plays in England during the years of Puritan rule, and was the first London theater to reopen after the Restoration. This bold spirit is central to our identity. With the Jacobean plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries as our cornerstone, Red Bull Theater is New York City's destination for dynamic performances of great plays that stand the test of time. The company also produces new works that are in conversation with the classics.

Red Bull Theater delights and engages the intellect and imagination of audiences. A home for artists, scholars and students, we strive to make our work accessible, diverse, and welcoming to all theatergoers. Educational as well as entertaining, our work keeps a rich and vital tradition thriving.

Red Bull Theater believes in the power of great classic stories and plays of heightened language to deepen our understanding of the human condition. We believe in the special ability of live theater to create unique, collective experiences. And we believe in the limitless capacity of classical theater to illuminate the events of our times.

Founded in 2003 with a production of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, Red Bull Theater has been acclaimed by The New York Times as "a dynamic producer of classic plays" and by Time Out as "the most exciting classical theater in New York."

Red Bull Theater serves adventurous theatergoers with OFF-BROADWAY PRODUCTIONS, REVELATION READINGS, and the annual SHORT NEW PLAY FESTIVAL. The company also offers outreach programs including SHAKESPEARE IN SCHOOLS bringing professional actors and teaching artists into public school classrooms, BULL SESSIONS, free post-play discussions with top scholars, PODCASTS and ACTING INTENSIVES in classical actor training led by veteran theater professionals.

In our 20-year history, Red Bull Theater has produced 24 Off-Broadway Productions and over 200 Revelation Readings of rarely seen classics, serving over 5,000 artists and providing quality artistic programming to an audience of over 200,000. The company's unique programming has received ongoing critical acclaim, and has been recognized with Lortel, Drama Desk, Drama League, Calloway, Off Broadway Alliance, and Obie nominations and Awards.

Visit REDBULLTHEATER.COM for more information.