

**Everyman Theatre
Cardiff**

Auditions

**Julius Caesar
by
William Shakespeare**

There are about 35 speaking parts in **Julius Caesar**. Many appear only in the first or second half, and extensive doubling was obviously expected. Only four - Brutus, Cassius, Mark Antony and Caesar - appear throughout the play and cannot be doubled. There are only two female parts - Portia and Calpurnia - who each have 2 short scenes in the first half, and can only be doubled with male characters in the second half. There also need to be enough 'Citizens' on stage to constitute a crowd or mob, and enough 'Soldiers' to represent two armies.

So I am planning on a mixed-gender company of between 12 and 18, with just four actors playing a single role, and everyone else playing at least 2 or 3 named parts, as well as un-named extras in the crowd- and battle-scenes. Consequently, my approach to casting will be gender-blind, and I have no strong feelings in most cases about age. Race or skin-colour are of course also irrelevant.

It will be fairly physical - one has to stage two riots, two on-stage murders, three suicides, a ghost and a battle - but it also obviously requires good verse-speaking, oratorical skills, and the ability to handle a long speech.

So I am going to audition in two stages - first, a general audition to perform two speeches (not necessarily of a character you are auditioning for) that will give me a sense of your voice and presence. Then call-backs to try out various scenes between two or more characters, to decide on precise casting.

You are of course free to express a preference for a particular part or parts, and choose to perform one of their speeches, but in the first part of the process there is no need to do so. You are also free to choose whatever other speeches from the play you would like (from 20 to a maximum of 40 lines), with the single exception of 'Friends Romans and Countrymen' - there are particular problems involved in performing so famous a speech, which we will address in rehearsal, so it is not suitable for audition purposes (quite apart from the risk to my sanity of having to listen to it too many times.)

However, if you would like some suggestions for suitable speeches, I have listed some below. Whatever you choose, I strongly suggest that you prepare them thoroughly beforehand, but don't attempt to perform them from memory.

CHARACTERS

I am not going to list all 35 of them in detail, but here are some brief thoughts about some of the major roles: As always with Shakespeare the characterisation is so rich that my comments only scratch the surface, and are merely a jumping-off point.

BRUTUS - despite the title, he is the protagonist - the 'tragic hero' if you like - and perhaps the most complex personality in the play, and requires a very layered performance. He is deeply conflicted, and while he prides himself on his honesty and openness with others, he is often deceived about himself. We are privy to his thought processes, which are often tortuous, to a greater degree than any Shakespearian role before Hamlet, and, while he needs to be 'noble', he is by no means always sympathetic.

CASSIUS - cynical, devious, untrustworthy, and with a huge chip on his shoulder, and yet he often IS sympathetic - probably because we can all identify with his sense of inferiority and need for reassurance. Perhaps the most intelligent - certainly the most politically-astute - character, but

lacking Brutus's self-confidence - mainly because he knows himself too well. It is somehow typical that he ends up killing himself (on his birthday!) by mistake, wrongly thinking he has sent a friend to his death.

ANTONY - plausible, smooth, even glamorous, and obviously an inspired orator and demagogue, but under the surface cold and calculating. His appeal is always to emotion, not reason, and he is a master at playing on the crowd's (and the audience's) feelings, but underneath there is a massive ego, and a coldly efficient instinct for self-interest. He needs to carry the audience with him, like the Roman mob, but also allow them, unlike the mob, to then see through him.

CAESAR - whatever else he is (great general, charismatic leader, loving husband - not to mention all the historical baggage which comes with the character), Caesar is a study in megalomania. We ought (for the first half of the play) to feel that he NEEDS to be eliminated, before feeling (for the second half) that it was a mistake. He is the personification of the adage that all power corrupts, even though megalomaniacs can be magnanimous too.

PORTIA - like Calpurnia, she is defined largely by her support for her husband, but she is a strong enough personality, and sufficiently aware of her own worth, to tell him off in no uncertain terms. Her style of support - unlike Calpurnia - is to be devastatingly honest and critical. But she is also clearly tender and loving, though it is a severe sort of love that expresses itself by stabbing yourself in the thigh.

CALPURNIA - see above - but unlike Portia, she is less assertive and more fearful (and superstitious). Like Portia, her loving relationship with her husband does much to humanise the rigid Roman orderliness and rigour of their environment.

CASCA - his bluff, prosy individuality in scene 2 is highly engaging and memorable (he is one of the few characters to actually have a few funny lines), though some see inconsistency in his later verse-speaking terror in the storm. Perhaps it's better to see this as a transition, revealing deeper aspects of his character, as he emerges as the most hot-headed, and even brutal, of the conspirators.

OCTAVIUS - even more cold and calculating than Antony, with none of the charm or glamour. He is though, immensely strong-minded, ambitious and sure of himself. Younger than the others, he grows in stature and confidence as the play progresses, and assumes control at the end.

FLAVIUS and MARULLUS - tribunes who appear in the first scene. Men of the people - in modern terms more like Trade Unionists than MPs - though with all the contempt for commoners of those only recently risen from their ranks.

CINNA, DECIUS, METELLUS, TREBONIUS CAIUS LIGARIUS - the remaining conspirators are not greatly individualised by Shakespeare, though Decius is clearly the most smooth-tongued and has the duty of persuading Caesar to come to the Senate, despite the urgings of his wife. So they are open to individual interpretation and differentiation.

CICERO, LEPIDUS - two older men, of contrasting character. Cicero, in his brief appearance in the storm, seems to represent maturity, wisdom and stability, whereas Lepidus stands for incompetence, cupidity and fussy self-importance.

LUCIUS - a boy, but possibly best played by an adult female. Servant to Brutus, and the epitome of innocence and loyalty.

SOOTHSAYER, CINNA the POET, ARTEMIDORUS and others - cameo roles with the scene-stealing qualities for which bit-parts in Shakespeare are noted.

LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, MESSALA, VARRO, CLAUDIUS, YOUNG CATO, STRATO, VOLUMNIUS, CLITUS, PINDARUS and others - soldiers and servants, mostly distinguished by their loyalty and service to, mostly, Brutus and Cassius, and who are involved in their defeat and suicides.

SUGGESTED SPEECHES

Here are a few speeches that are suitable for audition purposes. Choose two, but bear in mind that choosing a particular speech doesn't necessarily mean you are auditioning for that character (though it also doesn't mean you aren't.) And of course, you can always choose something else, apart from the first half of Antony's funeral oration - up to, say, 'If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.'

ACT I Scene 1:

MARULLUS

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
 What tributaries follow him to Rome
 To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?
 You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
 O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
 Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
 Have you climbed up to walls and battlements,
 To towers and windows, yea, to chimney tops,
 Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
 The livelong day, with patient expectation,
 To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome.
 And when you saw his chariot but appear,
 Have you not made an universal shout,
 That Tiber trembled underneath her banks
 To hear the replication of your sounds
 Made in her concave shores?
 And do you now put on your best attire?
 And do you now cull out a holiday?
 And do you now strew flowers in his way
 That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
 Be gone!
 Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
 Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
 That needs must light on this ingratitude.

ACT I Scene 2:

CASSIUS

I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
 As well as I do know your outward favour.
 Well, honour is the subject of my story.
 I cannot tell what you and other men
 Think of this life; but, for my single self,
 I had as lief not be as live to be
 In awe of such a thing as I myself.

I was born free as Caesar; so were you;
 We both have fed as well, and we can both
 Endure the winter's cold as well as he.
 For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
 The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
 Caesar said to me "Dar'st thou, Cassius, now
 Leap in with me into this angry flood
 And swim to yonder point?" Upon the word,
 Accoutered as I was, I plungèd in
 And bade him follow; so indeed he did.
 The torrent roared, and we did buffet it
 With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
 And stemming it with hearts of controversy.
 But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
 Caesar cried "Help me, Cassius, or I sink!"
 I, as Aeneas, our great ancestor,
 Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
 The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
 Did I the tired Caesar. And this man
 Is now become a god, and Cassius is
 A wretched creature and must bend his body
 If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.

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...
 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.
 I rather tell thee what is to be feared
 Than what I fear; for always I am Caesar.
 Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
 And tell me truly what thou think'st of him

CASSIUS

Well, Brutus, thou art noble. Yet I see
 Thy honorable mettle may be wrought
 From that it is disposed. Therefore it is meet
 That noble minds keep ever with their likes;
 For who so firm that cannot be seduced?
 Caesar doth bear me hard, but he loves Brutus.
 If I were Brutus now, and he were Cassius,
 He should not humor me. I will this night
 In several hands in at his windows throw,
 As if they came from several citizens,
 Writings, all tending to the great opinion
 That Rome holds of his name, wherein obscurely
 Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at
 And after this, let Caesar seat him sure,
 For we will shake him, or worse days endure.

ACT I Scene 3

CASCA

Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth
 Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
 I have seen tempests when the scolding winds
 Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
 Th' ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam
 To be exalted with the threat'ning clouds;
 But never till tonight, never till now,
 Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
 Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
 Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
 Incenses them to send destruction...
 A common slave (you know him well by sight)
 Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
 Like twenty torches joined; and yet his hand,
 Not sensible of fire, remained unscorched.
 Besides (I ha' not since put up my sword),
 Against the Capitol I met a lion,
 Who glazèd upon me and went surly by
 Without annoying me. And there were drawn
 Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women,
 Transformèd with their fear, who swore they saw
 Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.
 And yesterday the bird of night did sit
 Even at noonday upon the marketplace,
 Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies
 Do so conjointly meet, let not men say

“These are their reasons, they are natural,”
 For I believe they are portentous things
 Unto the climate that they point upon.

CASSIUS

You are dull, Casca, and those sparks of life
 That should be in a Roman you do want,
 Or else you use not. You look pale, and gaze,
 And put on fear, and cast yourself in wonder,
 To see the strange impatience of the heavens.
 But if you would consider the true cause
 Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,
 Why birds and beasts from quality and kind,
 Why old men, fools, and children calculate,
 Why all these things change from their ordinance,
 Their natures, and preformèd faculties,
 To monstrous quality—why, you shall find
 That heaven hath infused them with these spirits
 To make them instruments of fear and warning
 Unto some monstrous state.
 Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man
 Most like this dreadful night,
 That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars
 As doth the lion in the Capitol;
 A man no mightier than thyself or me
 In personal action, yet prodigious grown,
 And fearful, as these strange eruptions are.

ACT II Scene 1

BRUTUS

It must be by his death. And for my part
 I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
 But for the general. He would be crowned:
 How that might change his nature, there's the question.
 It is the bright day that brings forth the adder,
 And that craves wary walking. Crown him that,
 And then I grant we put a sting in him
 That at his will he may do danger with.
 Th' abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
 Remorse from power. And, to speak truth of Caesar,

I have not known when his affections swayed
 More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof
 That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
 Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
 But, when he once attains the upmost round,
 He then unto the ladder turns his back,
 Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
 By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.
 Then, lest he may, prevent. And since the quarrel
 Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
 Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented,
 Would run to these and these extremities.
 And therefore think him as a serpent's egg,
 Which, hatched, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,
 And kill him in the shell.

BRUTUS

Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
 To cut the head off and then hack the limbs,
 Like wrath in death and envy afterwards;
 For Antony is but a limb of Caesar.
 Let's be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.
 We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar,
 And in the spirit of men there is no blood.
 O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit
 And not dismember Caesar! But, alas,
 Caesar must bleed for it. And, gentle friends,
 Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully.
 Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
 Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds.
 And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,
 Stir up their servants to an act of rage
 And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make
 Our purpose necessary and not envious;
 Which so appearing to the common eyes,
 We shall be called purgers, not murderers.
 And for Mark Antony, think not of him,
 For he can do no more than Caesar's arm
 When Caesar's head is off.

PORTIA

Is Brutus sick? And is it physical
 To walk unbracèd and suck up the humours
 Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick,

And will he steal out of his wholesome bed
 To dare the vile contagion of the night
 And tempt the rheumy and unpurgèd air
 To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus,
 You have some sick offence within your mind,
 Which by the right and virtue of my place
 I ought to know of. And upon my knees
 I charm you, by my once commended beauty,
 By all your vows of love, and that great vow
 Which did incorporate and make us one,
 That you unfold to me, your self, your half,
 Why you are heavy, and what men tonight
 Have had resort to you; for here have been
 Some six or seven who did hide their faces
 Even from darkness...
 Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
 Is it excepted I should know no secrets
 That appertain to you? Am I your self
 But, as it were, in sort or limitation,
 To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
 And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
 Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
 Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

CALPURNIA

Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies,
 Yet now they fright me. There is one within,
 Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
 Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
 A lioness hath whelpèd in the streets,
 And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead.
 Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds
 In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
 Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol.
 The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
 Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan,
 And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.
 O Caesar, these things are beyond all use,
 And I do fear them...
 When beggars die there are no comets seen;
 The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes...
 Alas, my lord,
 Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.
 Do not go forth today. Call it my fear
 That keeps you in the house, and not your own.

We'll send Mark Antony to the Senate House,
 And he shall say you are not well today.
 Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.

ACT III Scene 1

CAESAR

I could be well moved, if I were as you.
 If I could pray to move, prayers would move me.
 But I am constant as the Northern Star,
 Of whose true fixed and resting quality
 There is no fellow in the firmament.
 The skies are painted with unnumbered sparks;
 They are all fire, and every one doth shine.
 But there's but one in all doth hold his place.
 So in the world: 'tis furnished well with men,
 And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive.
 Yet in the number I do know but one
 That unassailable holds on his rank,
 Unshaked of motion; and that I am he
 Let me a little show it, even in this:
 That I was constant Cimber should be banished
 And constant do remain to keep him so.

ANTONY

O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
 That I am meek and gentle with these butchers.
 Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
 That ever livèd in the tide of times.
 Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
 Over thy wounds now do I prophesy
 (Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips
 To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue)
 A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
 Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
 Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
 Blood and destruction shall be so in use
 And dreadful objects so familiar
 That mothers shall but smile when they behold
 Their infants quartered with the hands of war,
 All pity choked with custom of fell deeds;
 And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
 With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
 Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice

Cry "Havoc!" and let slip the dogs of war,
 That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
 With carrion men groaning for burial.

ACT III Scene 2

BRUTUS

Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear. Believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour that you may believe. Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living, and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him. As he was fortunate, I rejoice at it. As he was valiant, I honour him. But, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valor, and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak, for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

ANTONY

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
 To such a sudden flood of mutiny.
 They that have done this deed are honourable.
 What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
 That made them do it. They are wise and honourable
 And will no doubt with reasons answer you.
 I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts.
 I am no orator, as Brutus is,
 But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man
 That love my friend, and that they know full well
 That gave me public leave to speak of him.
 For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
 Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech
 To stir men's blood. I only speak right on.
 I tell you that which you yourselves do know,
 Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,
 And bid them speak for me. But were I Brutus,
 And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
 Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue
 In every wound of Caesar that should move
 The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.