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Melissa Chalsma, Artistic Director | David Melville, Managing Director



MEDIA ALERT & CALENDAR LISTING
February 19, 2019

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INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE CO. PRESENTS

JULIUS CAESAR

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

CO-DIRECTED BY MELISSA CHALSMA & DAVID MELVILLE

LIMITED ENGAGEMENT OPENS SATURDAY, MARCH 23

AT THE ISC STUDIO IN THE ATWATER CROSSING ARTS + INNOVATION COMPLEX

Los Angeles - Independent Shakespeare Co. (ISC), presenters of the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival, announce their first ever mounting of one of the greatest hits of the Elizabethan stage, **Julius Caesar**. Co-directed by ISC Artistic Director Melissa Chalsma and ISC Managing Director David Melville, William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** will begin

previews on the Ides of March (Friday, March 15), and will open Saturday, March 23, running through Saturday, May 11 at the ISC Studio in the Atwater Crossing Arts + Innovation Complex, 3191 Casitas Ave., Ste 130 in Atwater Village. Tickets are on sale now online at iscla.org or by calling 818-710-6306.

Rome teeters on the brink of civil war as Caesar's ambition for a crown threatens the stability of the Republic. Part ghost story, part political murder thriller, ancient Rome comes to vivid life in ISC's intimate indoor performance venue, the ISC Studio. Inspired by Orson Welles's 1937 Mercury Theater production, this pared down version of the text immerses the audience in the multiplicities of the conspiracy to save Rome and even gives the spectators a voice in the action. Audience participation encouraged (but not enforced!)

Comments Melissa Chalsma, co-director and ISC's Artistic Director, "I'm especially excited to test the capacity of our new Studio in terms of production values, but also in terms of the relationship between the audience and the action. We always envisioned the Studio as a flexible space, able to be configured in unique ways. With this production, we will be testing the limits of that flexibility, surrounding the audience with the action and making them complicit in Caesar's fate."

David Melville, co-director, ISC's Managing Director and appearing in the title role, says, "In approaching **Julius Caesar** we have been looking back to other politically charged plays that we have recently produced at the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival. *Titus Andronicus* begins with a crisis of succession and equally, in *Richard III* a fragile power vacuum is manipulated by the titular anti-hero as he sways the crowd to his side. We were able to involve our audience as another cast member – chanting for various factions and giving their support to whomever we guided them. With **Julius Caesar** we are taking our experiment a little further - the fate of the Republic depends upon the willingness of the public to choose between two vastly different rhetorical interpretations of Caesar's murder. With only 10 actors bringing this production to life, incorporating the audience as the citizens of Rome will create a world where we are all immersed in the proceedings. Will our audience give their allegiance to Brutus or Antony? Naturally, like any political entity, our production will try to lead them in a particular direction, but will they follow the mob? Like all experiments the outcome is uncertain. Taking inspiration from Orson Welles's sleek 1937 distilling of the text, we hope to spark a conversation about how groups are manipulated for political gain – and how willingly, as groups, we comply."

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DAVID MELVILLE (Co-Director & Julius Caesar) As one of the co-founders of ISC, David has performed in many ISC shows including the title roles in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard II* and *Richard III*; Prince Hal in *Henry IV*; Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Touchstone in *As You Like It* and Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night*. Other theatre credits include *Mother Courage* at the Mermaid Theatre, London (with Glenda Jackson); *Hamlet*, Almeida at the Hackney Empire, London and Broadway transfer (with Ralph Fiennes); *Ivanov* at The Almeida Theatre, London and Maly Theatre, Moscow. Also a director, he created the Rockabilly production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* among other ISC productions. David has appeared in several films including *Ironclad* (starring Paul Giamatti as King John), *The Understudy* and *Perfection*. On television, he has appeared as the hopeless British travel correspondent Lawrence Beldon-Smythe in the Travel Channel series *Lawrence of America*. David has composed songs for numerous film projects and theater productions (including the ISC original musical, *Red Barn*, now being developed as a film.)

MELISSA CHALSMA (Co-Director) is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Independent Shakespeare Co. (ISC). Under Melissa's leadership, the company created the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival, which has grown into the largest theater event of its kind in Los Angeles. Every summer, 45,000 Angelenos come together for productions, theater workshops, lectures, and performances by local artists. All of ISC summer events are admission-free. As a director, she strives to create a larger role for women in classical theater, often casting women in roles traditionally played by men. In 2018, ISC became only the second organization to receive the Paul Robeson Award by Actors' Equity Foundation and Actors' Equity Association. In 2015, ISC received the Margaret Harford Award for sustained excellence from the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle. She directs and acts in many ISC productions. She has performed in theaters across the country and on Broadway (including the American premiere of Harold Pinter's *MOONLIGHT* with Jason Robards, Blythe Danner, and Liev Schreiber).

The cast of **Julius Caesar** will feature: José Acain, Cynthia Boorujy, Sam Breen, Kendell Byrd, Faqir Hassan, David Melville, Kelvin Morales, John Philipps, Philicia Saunders and Paul Turbiak.

Lighting Design is by Bosco Flanagan. Costume Design is by Lia Wallfish. Assistant Director is Cary Reynolds. Stage Manager is Jenny Park.

SCHEDULE

Julius Caesar will be presented Friday, March 15 through Saturday, May 11. Thursdays – Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays at 2pm. No performance Sunday, April 21.

LOCATION

ISC Studio

3191 Casitas Ave., Ste 130

(between Fletcher Drive and Glendale Blvd.)

At the Atwater Crossing Arts + Innovation Complex, Los Angeles, CA 90039.

Free, ample lot and street parking.

TICKET PRICING

Generous Admission: \$35

General Admission: \$30 Saturdays & Sundays, \$25 Thursdays & Fridays

Students: \$15

Discount for educators: for details please call (818) 710-6306 or email indyshakes@iscla.org

For reservations, please call (818) 710-6306 or reserve online at www.iscla.org

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Calendar Listing:

Julius Caesar

Co-directed by Melissa Chalsma & David Melville

OPENS SATURDAY, MARCH 23 THROUGH SATURDAY, MAY 11

Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30pm; Sundays at 2pm

No performance Sunday, April 21

Previews are:

Friday, March 15 (The Ides of March)

Saturday, March 16

Sunday, March 17

Thursday, March 21

Friday, March 22

OPENING/PRESS NIGHT: Saturday, March 23 at 7:30pm

ISC STUDIO

3191 Casitas Ave. Ste 130

(between Fletcher Drive and Glendale Blvd.)

at the Atwater Crossing Arts + Innovation Complex

Los Angeles, CA 90039

Free, ample lot and street parking.

Tickets are Generous Admission: \$35; General Admission: \$30 Saturdays & Sundays, \$25

Thursdays & Fridays; Students: \$15

Educator discounts for preview performances. For details: indyshakes@iscla.org

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ABOUT INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE CO.

With the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival 2018, Independent Shakespeare Co. (ISC) celebrated the 15th anniversary of presenting free Shakespeare in Los Angeles city parks. Also in 2018, ISC opened the ISC Studio, an upgrade from our previous indoor space into a larger performance venue and lounge at the Atwater Arts + Innovation Complex. The ISC Studio is active and unpredictable, serving as a multi-purpose and multi-disciplinary laboratory. ISC is the 2018 recipient of the Paul Robeson Award by Actors' Equity Foundation and Actors' Equity Association (only the second organization to receive this honor). Our largest program is the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival – it has grown to become a tradition for tens of thousands of Angelenos, bringing together our diverse, vibrant community through accessible, imaginative performances of classical plays. In partnership with the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Park, we moved free Shakespeare in Barnsdall Park in 2010 to Griffith Park, the second largest city park in California. The growth in attendance is extraordinary: at our first season (at Barnsdall Park in 2004), we played to fewer than 1,000 people; since 2013 we have welcomed over 40,000 people each summer to the Old Zoo, and have now performed to over 382,000 people. Through classical theater we have attracted a community that is young (71% age 35 and under), diverse (48% identify as non-Caucasian, and 75% are middle and lower income), and from all corners of Los Angeles. www.iscla.org

Media and Communications Contact

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