

<i>Julius Caesar</i> Opens Shakespeare Fest Season

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Look for men in suits when the New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane opens its 18th season on June 9 with *Julius Caesar*. Set in 1930s America, the drama will feature charismatic politicians, backroom politics and people struggling with poverty and a fear of fascism.



John Neisler (from left) as Brutus, Silas Cooper as Cassius, and Shad Willingham as Marc Antony are politicians in the New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane staging of *Julius Caesar*. (Photo by John B. Barrois)

Depression-era politicians helped inspire the Tulane production, says director Amy Boyce Holtcamp.

“When I began thinking about setting this production in the 1930s, I began to realize that New Orleans' history provides rich inspiration for Caesar in Huey Long, the popular, charismatic ruler whose opponents thought had dictatorial tendencies, and who was eventually assassinated,” Holtcamp says.

Holtcamp, a director and playwright, says the classic drama is, at its heart, about controlling the hearts and minds of the people.

“The citizens of Rome ? the masses, the Plebians, the mob, the common man ? are an important part of this play about 'important' men,” she says. “*Caesar* is also a play about power of words and the dangers of political rhetoric.”

Holtcamp has directed on stages in New York (including Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Culture Project and Soho Rep), Seattle and throughout the Southeast. Her work as a playwright has been performed at The Studio in New York City, Atlanta's Seven Stages and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

The [New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane](#) performance on the Lupin Theater stage will feature Ron Gural as Caesar, Silas Cooper as Cassius, John Neisler as Brutus, Shad Willingham as Marc Antony, Carmen Torres as Calphurnia and Emilie Whelan as Portia. Two half-priced previews are on June 9 and 10 and opening night is June 11, with a pay-what-you-will performance (minimum of \$5) on June 19. The last performance is June 25.

Tickets are available at the Lupin Theater Box Office, Monday through Friday, from noon until 4 p.m. Tickets also can be ordered by phone at 504-865-5106, via [email](#) or [online](#).

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