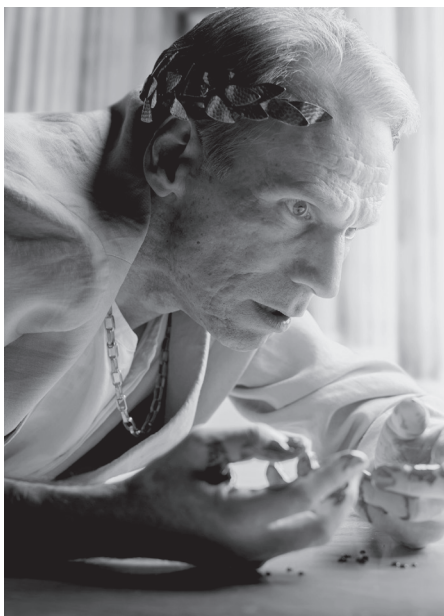


# JULIUS CAESAR

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Armando Durán (Julius Caesar)

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

**A** democracy in the midst of a controversial leadership transition that puts at risk society as we know it. Warring egos, where the difference between a desire to lead and a desire for power has become indistinguishable. A political divide that feels so cavernous and beyond healing that the conversation turns to violence. The world of Julius Caesar or America today? For so many of us, Brutus's struggle about how best to protect and unite his own divided republic hits all too close to home.

Tragically, even Brutus, a man with integrity and a deep conscience, allows his civic love to be contorted by the conclusion that the only way to oppose a world of tyranny is with the world's weapons. And his choice to continue the cycle of violence makes inevitable the destructive outcome of the story: a brutal civil war. In Brutus, I see a reflection of our own psychological war, waged daily

between the ancestral call to violence for the protection of our country and ideals, and the voice of our souls, which quietly reminds us that there could be a different, more peaceful solution.

In Caesar's Rome, anything from a political rally to an innocent walk down the wrong street can turn deadly with a single flare of a temper. In contemporary America, so many people die annually from gunfire that the death toll between 1968 and 2011 alone eclipses all wars ever fought by this country. Whether this addiction to violence is fueled by political ambition or senseless hate, *Julius Caesar* demands that we engage in vital conversation about the cost of the relentless cycle of violence that cripples our country: civically, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

I would like to acknowledge the deep physical and emotional sacrifice that this fierce ensemble of actors contributes to the conversation each time they live through the journey of this play. I hope we may meet their strength and bravery with our own unsparing reflection and discussion about our role in this disturbing and persistent call toward violence. What if that communal effort, in the Bowmer today, could be one small step on the journey from relentless violence toward radical healing?

—SHANA COOPER