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THE RUDE  MECHANICALS
PRESENT

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

BY
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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SNAKES IN A PLAY

CAST

Antony.....	Alan Duda
Cleopatra.....	Amy Rauch
Octavius.....	Arthur Rowan
Octavia.....	Kris Andersen
Enobarbus.....	Paul Davis
Canidius.....	Joshua Engel
Agrippa.....	Bill Jones
Philo.....	Calvin Smith
Maecenas.....	Joseph Kubinski
Lepidus/Clown.....	Sean Eustis
Charmian.....	Katie Wanschura
Iras.....	Heather Martin
Ensemble.....	Kevin Brotzman
.....	Melanie Jester
.....	Lauren Julien

SWING CAST

Cleopatra 9/30.....	Jaki Demarest
Cleopatra 10/13.....	Morrigan Condo
Enobarbus 9/30.....	Morrigan Condo
Charmian 9/30, 10/7, 10/12.....	Rachel Duda
Canidius 10/12.....	Lauren Julien
Philo 10/12.....	Kevin Brotzman
Eros 10/12.....	Joshua Engel

CREW

Director.....	Jaki Demarest
Stage Manager.....	Erin MacDonald
Apprentice Stage Manager.....	Lea Gallagher
Fight Directors.....	Arthur Rowan
.....	Jaki Demarest
Producer.....	Joshua Engel
Marketing/Publicity.....	Morrigan Condo
Graphic Design.....	Jaki Demarest and Morrigan Condo
Production Assistant.....	Sean Eustis
Technical Design.....	Jeff Poretsky
Musical Director.....	Arthur Rowan

Love to Constantia and our cats, I'll be home soon.

Melanie Jester (*Ensemble*) was the original model for the Oscar statuette.

Bill Jones (*Agrippa*) is a retired math professor. He splits his retirement between social work and acting. O2B2: the Father in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the Doctor in *Company of Wayward Saints*; PGLT: Kris Kringle in *Miracle on 34th St*; GAC: Frank in *Over The River*, the Duke in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. He thanks his wife for her inordinate patience.

Lauren Julien (*Ensemble, Canidius u/s*), who has been involved in theater since she learned to speak, was most recently seen in a production of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* at The Lee Center last spring. Since moving to D.C. three years ago, she's taken part in many shows either on or backstage, including the Natural Theatricals production of *The Women of Trachis*. She would like to thank her family, friends and boyfriend Andy for being nothing but supportive of her myriad creative pursuits, and The Rude Mechanicals for welcoming her so warmly into their close-knit, convivial and immeasurably talented family.

Joe Kubinski's (*Maecenas*) previous experience on stage was with a comedy troupe named Prune Bran. There, he suggested that the "mwaMWAmwa" noise in the Peanuts television specials was camouflage for unseemly suggestions, and thereby ruined "A Charlie Brown Christmas" forever for several audience members. He has a day job he is reluctant to discuss, but his business cards read "Penetration Tester."

Heather Martin (*Iras*) is enjoying sandwiching the Rude Mechanicals. No, she is not explaining that statement.

Amy Rauch (*Cleopatra*) is honored to once again be part of a Rude Mechanicals production. She has previously appeared

with the Rudes as Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*), Prince Arthur (*King John*), Mistress Ford (*Merry Wives of Windsor*) and most recently in the D.C. Fringe Festival as Hermia (*Midsummer Night's Dream*.) She would like to thank Jaki for giving her this fantastic opportunity, the Rudes for being such great (and patient!) people to work with, and Sir John for his help, insight, and friendship. IGYN!

Arthur Rowan (*Octavius*) Acting: Oberon in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (The Rude Mechanicals), The Beast in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (The Reston Players), Bassianus in *Titus Andronicus* (Washington Shakespeare Co.), Theseus in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Sir Walter Blunt in *Henry IV, Part One* (Virginia Shakespeare Festival), Swing in *A Comedy of Errors* (The Folger Theater) Fight Choreography: *Titus Andronicus*: knives, guns, unarmed (Washington Shakespeare Company), *Henry IV, Part One*: broadswords, sword & shield, axes (Virginia Shakespeare Festival), *A Comedy of Errors*: unarmed, toothbrush, floss (The Folger Theater), *Reduced Shakespeare Company*: Rapier & Dagger, Lightsaber. More information at arthurrowan.com. "Love all, trust few, wrong none."

Calvin Smith (*Philo*): see *Smith, Calvin*.

Katie Wanschura (*Charmian*) is eerily ecstatic about appearing for the first time with the Rude Mechanicals. She has been seen locally in such shows as *The Actor's Nightmare* [Ellen], Laurel Mill Playhouse; *Steel Magnolias* [Annelle], St. Mark's Players; and *As You Like It* [Celia], Shakespeare in the Parque. Thanks to all of you for coming to the show and especially to Shannon for practicing Shakespeare with me. Many thank yous to Jaki and the Rudes for letting me be part of this fabulous experience and laughing at AND with my "Cold-Hearted" snake dance.

CAST AND CREW BIOS

Kris Andersen (*Octavia*) is up here on stage for the first time ever (although she did play the title role in the Rudes' *Tempest*), so mostly she'd like to say that she is NOT up here, and you're not down THERE, and nobody's admitting that anybody's watching ANYONE act until it's all over. Many thanks to the Rudes, who were all wonderfully supportive of the newbie; special thanks to Arthur, Jaki, Mo, and Josh, who gave me invaluable advice; and affectionately-meant death threats to our beloved director, for this opportunity to relive my high school dating career.

Kevin Brotzman (*Ensemble, Philo u/s*) is thrilled to be making his Rudes debut in *Antony and Cleopatra*. You might remember him from theatre programs such as Washington College's Department of Drama, Riverside Players, and Writers' Theatre. Kevin has previously performed in a Shakespearean vein as Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and as Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*. Kevin's proudest accomplishment was his directing thesis, the not-at-all Shakespearean production of Rebecca Gilman's *Blue Surge*. This performance is dedicated to the memory of Boots.

Morrigan Condo (*Cleopatra and Enobarbus u/s*)

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E-3-----|0-0-0-|---1-0-0-|---3-2-0-0-2-
B-0-----|0-0-0-|---1-1-1-|---3-3-3-3-3-
G-0-----|0-0-0-|---2-0-0-|---2-2-2-2-2-
D-0-----|2-2-2-|---3-2-2-|---0-0-0-0-0-
A-2-----|2-2-2-|---3-3-3-|-----
E-3-2-2-2-|0-0-0-|---1-1-1-|-----
      G  D/F#  Em      F  C      D
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Paul Davis (*Enobarbus*) is doing theater to improve the sheen of his soul glow. This performance is dedicated to the Freaky Freakies, Doma and all the other mad-crazy people from WAC. I love working with Rudes even when they cover me in baby oil and torture me with

snakes...especially when they cover me in baby oil and torture me with snakes. He has done some plays, *As You Like It*, *Oedipus/Antigone*, *The Life and Death of King John*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *CapFringe Midsummer Night's Dream* and this play that you are reading this bio in this program right now...creepy.

Jaki Demarest (*Director, Cleopatra u/s*) Best known as Tawny Kitaen's nude body double in *The Perils of Gwendoline*, Jaki has been spat on by Avery Brooks, told to go to hell by Dick Cavett, abducted by aliens, and finally had a passionate affair with Bill Clinton, because she was tired of being different. Thanks and love to the cast and crew for keeping her sane.

Alan Duda (*Antony*) has played such varied roles with the Rudes as Old Man, Caliban, Buckingham, Courtesan, and understudying for the Big Ham. He is delighted to finally play the lead (as Mark An). Having directed *Troilus & Cressida* and *King John*, he will be moving up into the better half of the canon next Fall with *Coriolanus*.

Rachel Duda (*Charmian*) is pleased to be involved in her 14th Rude Mechanicals production. Previous roles include Mistress Page in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. Thank you, Jaki, for the opportunity to see my husband kiss four other women! (oh, wait...).

Joshua Engel (*Canidius*) is doing his 20th production with the Rude Mechanicals.

Sean Eustis (*Lepidus*) as been with the Rudes since their first season in 1999, and most recently as Bottom in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and again (and again) as the director for last year's Comedy of Errors. As an ophiopobe the irony is attempting to reach toxic levels as he finds himself in the Bardic Snake Play.

PLOT SUMMARY

The players file into the property room and don their costumes, transforming themselves into their characters. Cleopatra enters, and as Iras and Charmian help her into costume and makeup, painting her into physical reality, the players surrounding her describe her, writing her into the ambivalence, the fundamental contradictions that surround her. Antony enters, and the play begins.

Antony luxuriates in Alexandria with his mistress, Cleopatra, while his fellow Romans complain that their once great military leader has been ruined by his unnatural obsession with a foreign queen. Messages arrive from Rome, and Antony continues to ignore them. The news of his wife Fulvia's death, and the civil strife brewing in Rome in his absence, finally force Antony to return to Rome.

Antony and Octavius, his fellow Triumvir and the most dangerous of his political rivals, quarrel upon his return to Italy. The argument is resolved by Agrippa's suggestion of a marriage between Antony and Octavius' recently widowed sister, Octavia, a marriage that would serve to cement the alliance between the Triumvirs.

Philo delivers the news of Antony's marriage to a furious Cleopatra, and is thrashed for it. Cleopatra grieves in Alexandria, gathering all the news of her rival she can, and Antony's passionless marriage to Octavia steadily deteriorates. When Antony finally abandons Octavia and returns to Cleopatra, ceding vast swaths of Roman territory to Egypt, war between Octavius and Antony, Rome and Egypt, is the inevitable result.

Antony rashly decides to fight by sea at Actium rather than land, against the counsel of his best officers, and the

promptings of common sense, for no better reason than that Octavius has dared him to do so. Cleopatra flees the battle, and Antony flees after her, leaving his forces to be decimated by Octavius and Agrippa. Philo defects to Octavius' camp. Octavius tells Antony's ambassador, Canidius, that Cleopatra will be permitted to keep Egypt if she kills Antony or drives him out. In growing desperation, Antony challenges Octavius to single combat, seeing it as his only chance to win the war.

Octavia decides to fight for Antony's love, and is spirited into Alexandria by Agrippa. Antony is initially won over, and agrees to return to her and to their children. Octavia then confronts Cleopatra, while the players take sides and cheer them both on. Antony and Octavia finally quarrel, and Octavia abandons Antony to Cleopatra and his inevitable fate.

Octavius declines single combat with Antony, and another battle is joined, following another night of revelry between Antony and Cleopatra. The once-loyal Enobarbus abandons Antony for Octavius, and Octavius puts the defecting soldiers on the front lines. Antony's forces win this battle, and Enobarbus suicides.

The final battle turns against Antony, with Cleopatra's forces surrendering easily to those of Octavius, leaving Antony convinced that she has finally decided to sell him out. They quarrel violently, and Cleopatra, in desperation, sends her maid Iras to tell Antony she is dead. The hastily conceived plan backfires miserably, and instead of coming to mourn over his fallen love, Antony decides to end his own life, the actor tiring of the play and leaving it.

Failing in that as in so much else, he

manages to fatally wound himself, but does not die immediately.

Octavius publicly mourns Antony's death with a great deal of show, but as character and actor, he sees and uses the opportunity to take over the writing of the play and reshape reality to suit his purposes. He rewrites himself as Cleopatra's liberator, protector and friend, and sets in motion the playing of a grand scene in Rome, a triumph in which Cleopatra will be a featured player.

The imprisoned queen wins the friendship of the kindly and honorable

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

If there can be said to be one great theme running through Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies, it is this: the destruction of 'seeming,' with all its attendant illusions, and the triumphant re-entrenching, terrible or glorious, of reality.

In *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, the male disguises adopted by the female characters are penetrated and done away with, and normative gender roles are reestablished, joyfully, with marriages. In *Othello*, the web of lies in which Iago has ensnared Othello is finally, forcibly cut away, too late to save anyone from the bloodbath of deception and revelation. In *Romeo & Juliet*, the lovers are found together in death, having lived, loved and died entirely in night and in secret, and 'a glooming peace' comes only with the stark and revelatory light of morning.

It is the characters who live to piece everything together afterward, to stitch, often painfully and laboriously, the fabric of reality together again, who are, in effect, the driving creative forces writing that reality for us. They are the ones to carve the play's lessons on the dark

Agrippa, who tells her of the plot, and solidifies her resolve to die before that scene can be played.

From there, the fraying fabric of the play begins to dissolve completely, torn between the competing paradigms of Octavius and Cleopatra. Cleopatra writes herself and Antony into greatness with her suicide, denying Octavius his final scene.

The end dissolves into utter chaos as Octavius fails to write the players a satisfactory ending, and they turn on him and each other, all of them competing to be heard as the lights fade to black.

walls of our imaginings, the ones to shape what we've seen, and cast the final judgments. There is punishment for the wicked, if not always happiness for the good. There is redemption, and catharsis.

This is formula. This is our ritual and our rite. There is nothing so unsettling in the world as a lack of closure.

I've spent the better part of two years trying to explain to myself the unpopularity of this play, in the act of preparing to direct it. The odd, astringent taste it leaves in the mouth in spite of the hyperbolic beauty of its writing, and the power, earthy vitality and extraordinary complexity of its characters. And I think it can best be summed up as a violent and deliberate act of ambivalence on Shakespeare's part, one that was not well received in its day, and has known only brief surges of popularity in the days since. *Antony & Cleopatra* makes hungry where most it satisfies, leaving us with the stark, gnawing sensation of the unfinished.

Reality successfully overcomes the seductive and terrible power of illusion

in the bleak Scottish Highlands, in rotten Denmark, in sweltering, war-torn Cyprus, in embattled Verona. But in the rich soil of old Nile, imagination takes root and swells beyond the power of cool Roman logic to decipher and diminish it. Antony and Cleopatra write themselves into greatness. And no matter how vulgar their actions, their abuses of servants and messengers, their continually expressed obsessions with the earth-bound pleasures of sex, food and wine, their infidelities, their betrayals, their ignoble acts, their instability and inadequacy as rulers, the patina of their greatness is strangely undiminished. Whether we see them as a great man and woman who were flawed rulers, or great rulers who were flawed human beings, we are forced by the sheer weight of the words to acknowledge their greatness.

They die as they lived, with an odd, ambiguous blend of black comedy and grand gesture, and Octavius' summation and closing, his stolid Roman conclusions, are brief, desultory, unsatisfying. The reality he represents is simply not as compelling as the glittering illusions with which Antony and Cleopatra have managed to surround themselves; indeed, Octavius himself does nothing to dispel them, buying into them in an odd final act of kindness while simultaneously encouraging Agrippa and the other survivors to "see high order in this great solemnity." 'Seeming' is in no wise destroyed; neither is 'high order' established. Octavius tries, and fails, to chart a middle course between them, leaving us with a sense of unresolved ambiguity that has trickled down through the centuries, fundamentally unanswered and unanswerable.

Little wonder the play is so seldom performed; we tend to dislike that which

defies easy definition. If this play enjoys any underground popularity, it is with that rare fringe sect of true believers, the lovers of enigma who like to hunt for their answers. This is advanced Shakespeare, a piece that has teased, laughed us out of patience, laughed us into patience, and defied analysis for close to four hundred years. The Rudes' treatment isn't about resolving those mysteries; it's entirely about reveling in their continued existence, examining the work in an entirely new light, reworked and interleaved with three scenes from John Dryden's companion play, "All For Love."

With all its rampant, chaotic, deliciously uncontrolled and unresolved illusion, it became irresistible to set the play in a theatrical property room and give it a Brechtian spin. To let you see the actors as actors, the play as a play. To show you the edges, to immerse you in the illusions themselves while showing you exactly how we, as actors, create them, Penn and Teller style. To thin the dividing line between actors and audience. To engage the intellect rather than the emotions by giving you that one distancing level between you and the story. To deny catharsis. To highlight the vitality, the vulgarity, the linguistic violence and the genuinely exalted beauty of the work. The play is very like Cleopatra herself, half goddess, half guttersnipe, one foot in Heaven and the other in the stews, frustrating, engaging, constantly shifting, recklessly passionate, endlessly fascinating.

And if you come away with nothing more than the sense that it was maddening and intriguing in equal parts, not sure whether you loved it or hated it, you will have come as close to "getting it" as anyone ever will.