

# Brooklyn College

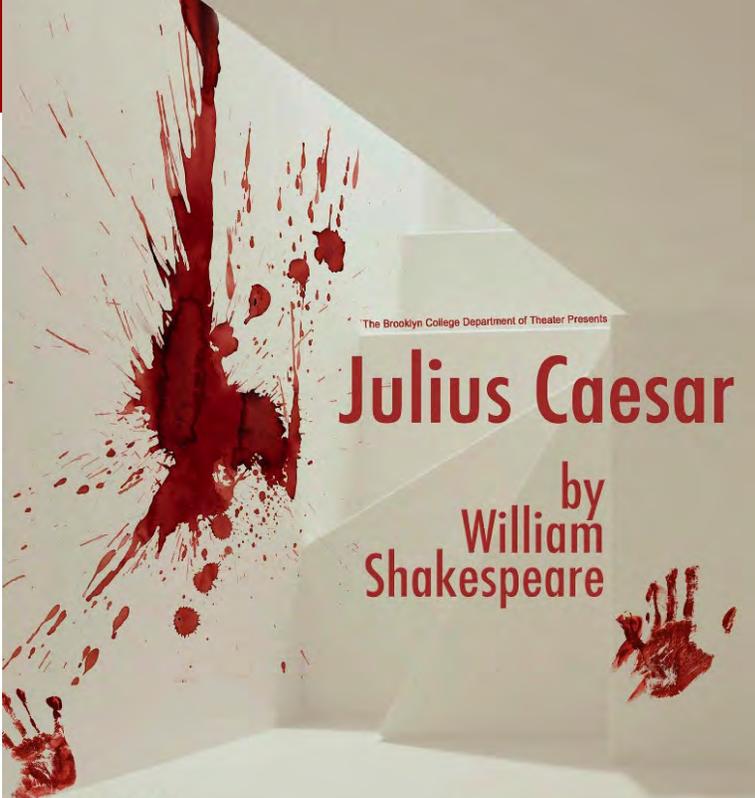
Theater

## Alumni Newsletter

April 2011

### Coming Attractions

Brooklyn College's Department of Theater will present William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* from May 5 through 8. Drawing on the gripping story of the assassination of an iconic leader and the civil war that follows, *Julius Caesar* is part political thriller, part psychological drama, and part mythology. Utilizing gender-neutral casting, under the direction of William Addis (MFA, '08) and performed in the intimate setting of the New Workshop Theater, this is *Julius Caesar* as you have never seen it before: bold, bloody and brutal. General Admission: \$15; Seniors: \$12; Students: \$6. For reservations, please call 718-951-4500.



The Brooklyn College Department of Theater Presents

# Julius Caesar

by  
William  
Shakespeare

May 5 - 8, 2011  
Thurs.-Sat. at 7:30 pm  
Sat. & Sun. at 2:00 pm

The New Workshop Theater  
Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts  
at Brooklyn College

General Admission: \$ 15  
Seniors: \$ 12  
Students: \$ 6

INFORMATION: (718) 951-4500  
<http://dephome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/theater>

directed by  
William Addis

# Up and Comer: Going Barefoot off-Broadway



By Andy Buck

Joseph Sousa (front) with Casandera M. J. Lollar, Will Allen, and Shayna Padovano in *Teeth of the Sons*

Two years ago, actor/writer **Joseph Sousa** (BFA, '07) joined Barefoot Theatre Company, an off-Broadway troupe teeming with Brooklyn College alumni. The company, which was founded in 1998, has received wide acclaim for collaborations with Obie-winning playwright Israel Horovitz and for a daring 2008 stage adaptation of *Dog Day Afternoon*. It's currently presenting Sousa's latest play, *Teeth of the Sons*, through May 14 at Manhattan's Cherry Lane Studio Theatre. The drama, about the clash between two brothers after one of them converts to Orthodox Judaism, features Sousa along with two of his former Brooklyn College classmates, **Will Allen** and **Casandera M. J. Lollar**. Other alumni in the company include director **Nicole Haran**, costume designer **Victoria Malvagno**, and lighting designer **Niluka Hotaling**.

## How did *Teeth of the Sons* first take shape?

I started writing it back at Brooklyn College when a fellow BFA student, Vincent Ingrisano, won a challenge grant from the Undergraduate Theatre Organization to produce a play. I was in *Mother Courage* at the time [with Meryl Streep] and I would hang out a lot with Austin Pendleton who is a terrific actor. But he's also a writer and that's what inspired me to start writing—as a way of improving my acting. I was also dating Jessica Langer at the time. She was an MFA student and is now my fiancée. And from her I was learning what it means to be a third-generation Jewish American whose grandparents survived the Holocaust. So I added that element to the characters. The play is set on Avenue J in Midwood, right by the campus.

## How did you hook up with Barefoot?

Barefoot was founded 12 years ago at Brooklyn College by **Francisco Solorzano**, **Michael LoPorto**, Nicole Haran, and Victoria Malvagno. Rose Bonczek and Judylee Vivier are on the Board of Directors. I was hearing these mythic stories of Frank Solorzano, a BFA who had become really notable off-Broadway, and I wanted to meet him. Then I heard that he had done an adaptation of *Dog Day Afternoon*, and that he was starring in it and directing it. I thought, "This guy's insane; there's no way he's pulling this off." But I saw it and it completely blew me away. He really knew how to make it into an ensemble stage piece. It was incredible.



Left to right: Craig Stekeur;  
the TDF Costume Collection

## Dressed for Success: Working the TDF Costume Collection

**Craig Stekeur** (BA, '09) wasn't sure what he wanted to do when he transferred to Brooklyn College. He just knew he loved theater. "When we had to do the practicums," he recalls, "I thought, 'I don't really like lights, I am not a builder. But I like putting clothes on people. I like the franticness of quick changes.' So I took all the costume classes I could and left the school wanting to become a Broadway dresser."

As he begins working his way up that ladder, Stekeur is meanwhile making invaluable industry connections in a new job he started in January on the staff of the Theatre Development Fund's Costume Collection, a repository of 75,000 costumes available for rent by non-profit companies and commercial producers alike.

"We have costumes that Hugh Jackman wore in *The Boy from Oz*," Stekeur reports. "The costume designer for 'Saturday Night Live' comes every week; this month, there was a *Frankenstein* sketch they did with Helen Mirren, using costumes pulled from our collection. We also have a lot of Bob Mackie dresses." Another frequent visitor is the Tony Award-winning designer Gregg Barnes (*The Drowsy Chaperone*), who is doing a production of *Follies* in Washington, D.C. with Bernadette Peters and is appropriating costumes he designed for a legendary 1998 version of that show at Paper Mill Playhouse.

Stekeur is enjoying both the professional hookups as well as the opportunity to put his costume, theater management, and theater history classes to good use. He made quite an impression on the day of his interview when he revealed an unusual tribute to his chosen field: a startling tattoo on his right bicep showing the notorious body stocking that Anita Morris wore in the original Broadway production of *Nine*. "I love costumes so much," he declared at the time, "I got my favorite one tattooed on my arm."

As it happens, the original designer for *Nine*, William Ivey Long, had been honored two years earlier at TDF's Irene Sharaff Awards, an annual tribute that, for the last 18 years, has celebrated the top costume designers and artisans in the industry. At this year's awards, which were held this month, Long himself was present and although Stekeur didn't get a chance to reveal his handiwork, the experience marked him. "It was very weird actually," he says with a laugh. "I had come full circle in a way."



Brooklyn College's Department of Theater will present its 2011 Pre-Thesis Festival, an evening of one-act plays showcasing the work of first-year MFA Directing candidates (in photo, from left to right) **Adrian Wattenmaker**, **Adrienne Kapstein**, and **Josh Penzell**.

The festival will be presented in the Roosevelt Extension Theater, Room 307RE, May 12 – 15. Show times are Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. All performances are free.

## ALUMNI News briefs:

### **BA in Theater**

- Reynaldo Piniella: Working with Obie-winning director Jim Simpson on *Future Anxiety* at the Flea Theater, through May 26

### **BFA in Acting**

- Luke Landric Leonard, 1998: As artistic director of Monk Parrots, is helping to create a site-specific performance titled *Gay Rodeo By-Laws*, to be presented on May 21 and 22 at 14 Wall Street; also creating, directing, and designing *Here I Go*, at Dixon Place in June
- Francisco Solorzano, 2000: Starring in this summer's world premiere of *Last Day* by Richard Vetere, at Massachusetts' Gloucester Stage Company; continuing as co-artistic director of New York's Barefoot Theatre Company

### **BFA in Design**

- Kathryn Squitieri, 2009: Pursuing an M.A. in Fashion and Textile Studies: History, Theory and Museum Practice at the Fashion Institute of Technology; assisted on a production this spring of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* for the Riverside Theatre in Vero Beach, FL; currently designing the costumes for *Hairspray* at Fort Hamilton High School in Brooklyn

# ALUMNI News briefs:

## MFA in Acting

- Bianca Bryan, 2008: Will be performing in the (Re:) Directions Theatre Company's upcoming premiere in New York of the Sleeping Beauty-inspired musical *Fairy Tale*, featuring Sahara Davenport from *RuPaul's Drag Race*
- Ian Wen, 2005: Performing with the award-winning experimental troupe Blessed Unrest in *ArtCamp SexyTime FootBall*, May 5-23 at the Interart Theatre on West 52<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan

## MFA in Directing

- Sarah Benson: Continues as artistic director of Soho Rep, whose widely acclaimed production of *Born Bad*, written by Debbie Tucker Green and directed by Leah C. Gardiner, is finishing an extended run on May 7
- Jonathan Hadley, 2007: Playing the role of Bob Crewe on the National Tour of *Jersey Boys*; teaching workshops and master classes around the country
- Jack Savage, 2009: Starting a karaoke business for the theater community in the Times Square district and is seeking a sound equipment consultant (any leads can be sent to [TheaterAlumni@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:TheaterAlumni@brooklyn.cuny.edu) and will be forwarded)
- Adrian Wattenmaker, 2012: Directed Tom Sime's *The Right Reasons* this month for EBE Ensemble's fourth annual *Elephants on Parade* festival of new one-acts, at the Fourth Street Theatre in New York

## MFA in Dramaturgy

- Brent Stansell, 2008: Lecturing at George Washington University, American University, the Catholic University of America, and Montgomery College; also works as a teaching artist for Shakespeare Theatre Company, Folger Theatre, and Round House Theatre, and is a co-founder of DC Theatre Collective

## MFA in Playwriting Program, English Department

- Annie Baker, 2009: Her 2009 off-Broadway hit, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, has become one of the most widely produced new plays in the country
- Young Jean Lee, 2005: Her Obie Award-winning company just wrapped up a sold-out run of her new cabaret piece, *We're Gonna Die*, at Joe's Pub