

Julius Caesar uniquely interpreted

Julius Caesar
Citadel MacLab Theatre
through December 3

review by Antonella Cuciz

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears." These immortal words of Mark Anthony ring strong over the loudspeaker — yes, the loudspeaker. Many attempts have been made throughout the years to alter such Shakespearean works as *Julius Caesar* in an attempt to appeal to modern audiences. In doing so, directors must exercise extreme caution, for if the fine line between tackiness and creativity is crossed, the contemporary version simply will not do the original justice.

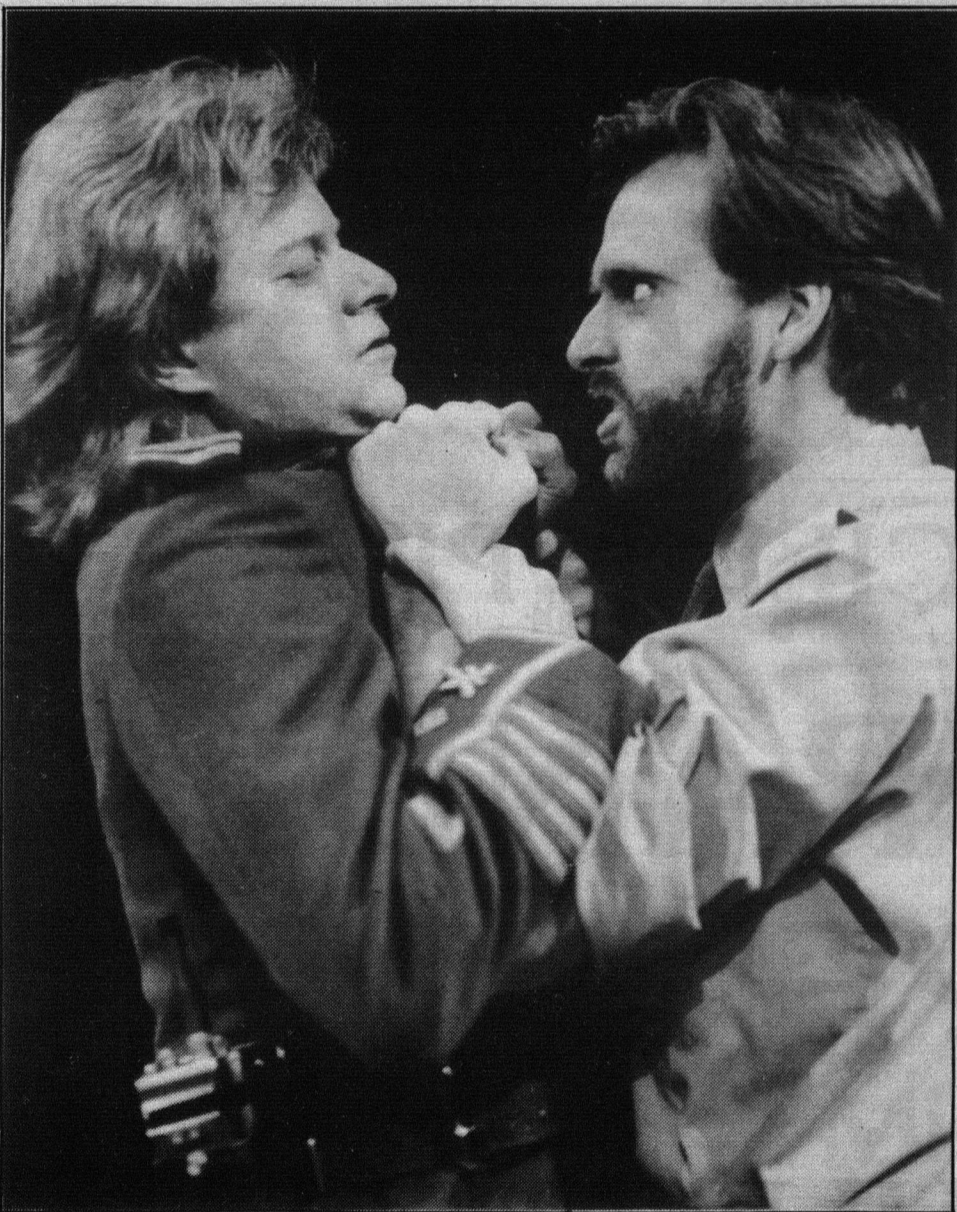
The Citadel's recent production of *Julius Caesar* is a very ingenious interpretation of the Master's original script. From the opening act, one immediately notices a diversion from the original. There is a Latin American influence in the attire worn by the cast and in the background music. This theme is reinforced by the fact that Julius Caesar, played by Donald Adams, looks surprisingly like Fidel Castro.

Apart from the superficial modifications

(double-breasted suits replacing togas), very little of the dialogue or plot is altered. Resentment over Julius Caesar's successes have grown amongst his advisors who plan and commit his murder through a brutal stabbing scene. The audience is treated at this point to an extremely powerful piece of theatrics as Mark Anthony vows to avenge Caesar's murder. The war scenes that follow, pitting his army against that of Brutus (a fellow conspirator, but for more noble reasons), are done in twentieth-century 'Rambo' style — complete with machine guns and strobe lighting.

Some may argue that this play lacks in quality due to a failure to adhere to tradition. One cannot, however, argue the fact that the acting is superb, particularly on the part of Randy Hughson (Caius Cassius). As well, during certain 'mob' scenes, members of the company make their way down into the audience giving the audience the sensation of being part of the action.

This modern version of *Julius Caesar* is undisputedly an extremely well-designed, well-acted and very entertaining play.



Ed Ellis

Randy Hughson as Caius Cassius receives abuse from Marcus Brutus, played by Darren O'Donnell.

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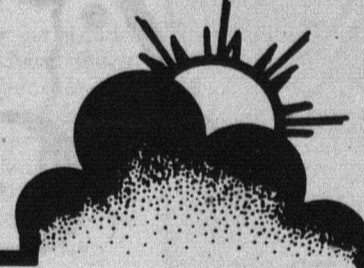
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