

THE NEW VICTORY THEATER 2016-17 SEASON

Allison Mui | Director of Public Relations | amui@new42.org | 646.223.3067
Kevin Bradley Jr. | Public Relations Associate | kbradley@new42.org | 646.223.3065

The New Victory Theater Presents The Acting Company's



Limited Engagement Pairs Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* with *X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation*, a New Play by Marcus Gardley

CAESAR / X Opens in New York City March 17

New York, NY (February 7, 2017) -- The assassinations of Rome's great ruler of the Republic and revolutionary leader Malcolm X take to the stage when Tony Award-winning **The Acting Company** couples Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* with *X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation*, a compelling new play by lauded playwright **Marcus Gardley** (*The House that Will Not Stand*, *The Gospel of Lovingkindness*, *Every Tongue Confess*, *On The Levee*). These two gripping dramas make their Off-Broadway debut at The New Victory Theater from March 17 - 26, 2017.

X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation, written by 11-time AUDELCO nominee and PEN/Laura Pels Award-winner Marcus Gardley, is about the assassination of **Malcolm X** and the tumultuous landscape of ideology and activism of the 1960s. Drawing inspiration from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Gardley explores the tense political climate that led to the death of the controversial and influential Black Nationalist leader—both the story we think we know and details seldom explored.

Directed by Ian Belknap, Artistic Director of The Acting Company, *X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation* takes place in a fictitious courtroom. With each witness called to the stand by Betty Shabazz (the prosecution) and Louis X (the defendant), audiences visit crucial moments leading up to the assassination of Malcolm X on February 21, 1965. Told through the poignant memories of key characters in Malcolm's life, each testimony sheds new light on one of America's most complex and compelling historical figures.

Julius Caesar, directed by Devin Brain, Associate Artistic Director of The Acting Company, portrays a rising political star torn down by his most trusted allies. Audiences witness the art of persuasion, the ugliness of backroom politics and the historical patterns we can't stop repeating. Tackling essential questions about the balance of ambition, personal loyalty and love of country, Shakespeare's timeless political masterpiece has never been more relevant.

"This repertory tells stories that I hope will charge audiences to look at the past with an eye to taking action in the present," says Belknap. Set in a rotunda in the style of a Roman Senate with limited audience seating on stage, both shows feature the same ensemble of actors and a set by Helen Hayes Award-winning designer Lee Savage (*The Lightening Thief, Satchmo at the Waldorf*).

For ***X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation***, the cast features Jimonn Cole as Malcom X; Jonathan-David as Louis X; Chelsea Lee Williams as Betty Shabazz; William Sturdivant as Elijah Muhammad and Bootblack; and Joshua David Robinson as Brother Eugene X and Doc. Other cast includes Gabriel Lawrence as Muhammad the First; Kevis Hillocks as Wilbert X; N'Jameh Camara as the Judge; and ensemble members Austin Purnell and Tatiana Wechsler. The creative team includes Candice Donnelly (Costume Design), Mary Louise Geiger (Lighting Design), Justin Ellington (Sound Design/Music Composition), Byron Easley (Choreography), Elizabeth Smith (Voice, Speech and Text Consultant) and Orlando Pabotoy (Fight Direction).

For ***Julius Caesar***, the same ensemble is cast as follows: Gabriel Lawrence as Julius Caesar; William Sturdivant as Caius Cassius; Jimonn Cole as Marcus Brutus; Jonathan-David as Mark Antony; and Joshua David Robinson as Casca and Titinius. Other cast members include N'jameh Camara as Calpurnia; Chelsea Williams as Portia; Kevin Hillocks as Octavius; Austin Purnell as Soothsayer; and Tatiana Wechsler as Trebonius. The creative team includes Jennifer Moeller (Costume Design), Mary Louise Geiger (Lighting Design) and Nathan A. Roberts and Charles Coes (Music and Sound Design), Elizabeth Smith (Voice, Speech and Text Consultant) and Orlando Pabotoy (Fight Direction).

CAESAR / X premiered in January 2017 as part of The Acting Company's 44th national tour in artistic and educational collaboration with nearly 30 universities, colleges and community partners across the country. Founded in 1972 by John Houseman and Margot Harley, The Acting Company has performed 143 productions for almost four million people in 48 states and ten countries. Additionally, the Company has received Obie, AUDELCO and Los Angeles Critics Circle Awards, and a 2003 Tony Honor for Excellence in Theater.

Marcus Gardley, hailed by *The New Yorker* as "the heir to Garcia Lorca, Pirandello and Tennessee Williams," was awarded the 2011 PEN/Laura Pels Award for mid-career Playwright. His play *Every Tongue Confess* was nominated for a Steinberg New Play Award and the Charles MacArthur Award, and was the recipient of the Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. His play with music, *On the Levee*, which premiered with LCT3 at The Duke on 42nd Street, was nominated for 11 AUDELCO Awards, including Outstanding Playwright. He is the recipient of a Helen Merrill Award, a Kesselring Honor, the Gerbode Emerging Playwright Award, the National Alliance for Musical Theatre Award, the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Scholarship and the ASCAP Cole Porter Award.

Julius Caesar Performance Schedule

Sunday, March 19 at 3pm**

Sunday, March 26 at 3pm

**The March 19 performance of *Julius Caesar* will be audio-described.

Julius Caesar has a running time of 90 minutes with no intermission, and is recommended for everyone ages 13 and up.

X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation Performance Schedule

Friday, March 17 at 7pm

Saturday, March 18 at 1pm / 7pm

Friday, March 24 at 7pm*

Saturday, March 25 at 1pm / 7pm

*The March 24 performance of *X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation* will be both sign-interpreted and audio-described.

X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation has a running time of 2 hours, including one intermission, and is recommended for everyone ages 13 and up.

Learn more about [Julius Caesar](#) and [X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation](#) at [NewVictory.org](#) and by visiting [TheActingCompany.org](#)

CAESAR / X is supported, in part, by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Major support for *X: Or, Betty Shabazz v. The Nation* is provided by the Roy Cockrum Foundation.

Ticket Information

Tickets for both productions of **CAESAR / X** at The New Victory Theater (209 West 42nd Street) are \$16-\$38 based on seat locations. For New Victory Members, tickets are \$10-\$25 based on seat locations. All tickets are available online ([NewVictory.org](#)) and by telephone (646.223.3010).

Limited on-stage seating is available by calling the box office. The New Victory Theater box office (209 West 42nd Street) is open Sunday & Monday from 11am-5pm and Tuesday through Saturday from 12pm-7pm.

Theatergoers who buy tickets for three or more New Victory shows qualify for free Membership benefits, including locked-in discount ticket prices, free unlimited exchanges (up to 48 hours in advance) and access to a first-look purchase period for newly added performances.

About The New Victory Theater

The New Victory Theater brings kids to the arts and the arts to kids as New York City's premier theater devoted to the highest quality performing arts for kids and families. Serving the city in all its diversity, The New Victory Theater on 42nd Street presents theater, dance, circus, opera and music from around the world at affordable ticket prices. In addition to its public performances, the New Vic is also the largest provider of live performance to NYC school kids, serving 40,000 students in grades PreK-12 from more than 200 schools, after school programs and day camps each year. The New Victory Theater's contributions to the cultural landscape of the city have been honored by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, a national Arts Education Award from Americans for the Arts and a Drama Desk Award for "providing enchanting, sophisticated children's theater that appeals to the child in all of us, and for nurturing a love of theater in young people."

About The New 42nd Street

Founded in 1990, The New 42nd Street is an independent nonprofit organization charged with the continuous cultural revival of 42nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. Committed to the transformational power of the arts, The New 42nd Street builds on the foundation of seven historic theaters to make extraordinary performing arts and cultural engagement part of everyone's life. The New 42nd Street fulfills this purpose by ensuring the ongoing vibrancy of 42nd Street's historic theaters; maintaining and fully using the New 42nd Street Studios and The Duke on 42nd Street to support performing artists in the creation of their work; and through The New Victory Theater, New York's premier theater for kids and families.

#